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LIFE of VIJAYKRISHNA

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LIFE OF VIJAYKRISHNA

LIFE OF VIJAYKRISHNA

A STUDY IN DEVOTIONAL MYSTICISM

BISHNU CHARAN DAS

শ্রীশ্রীবিজয়কৃষ্ণ মঠ
শাস্ত্র
নাম
সদাচার
বারাণসী

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32, Upper Circular Road, Calcutta.

Dedicated Most Respectfully
To
My Beloved
Gurudeva

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BANARAS

THE PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In offering this book to the public, I need say a few words in connection with it. It was written by Bishnu Charan Das, while he was Lecturer in English in the University of Dacca. In 1936 he went to Puri, availing himself of the summer vacation, which had begun earlier that year on account of a violent outbreak of smallpox at Dacca. At Puri, he received a suggestion from Swami Kiranchand Darbesh to write the Life of Vijaykrishna Goswamiji in English. Accordingly, he began writing it then and there. He had, however, to come back to Dacca shortly to attend to his duties at the University, but he devoted himself to the work of writing the book during his leisure hours. The book was nearing completion, when he was suddenly snatched away from the field of his activity by the rude hand of Death in January 1938, before he completed the twenty-fifth year of his life.

Bishnu Charan had many possibilities in life. God had sent him here with rare gifts of head and heart and when they were just beginning to unfold, it pleased Him to take him away from the scene. Bishnu Charan was born in February 1913, at Lalbag in the town of Dacca. He was the only son of Shri Rajnarayan Das, retired Demonstrator in Physics, Dacca College, and a disciple of Mahatma Mayurmukut Baba of the Himalayas, who was a follower of our Master Vijaykrishna. Bishnu Charan was a brilliant scholar. Though not of robust physique, he had keen intellect and good memory. Study was a passion with him. Even in his childhood he evinced a taste for learning. At the age of nine years, he became a student of the West End High School and, in due course, entered the University of Dacca, having passed through Dacca Intermediate College. In all these institutions, he was the foremost student of his class. He passed all his examinations in the First Division, in spite of a serious attack of heart disease and also of kala-azar, both of which broke down his health to the detriment of his studies. In the B.A. Honours Examination, he was first in the First Class and secured every prize, medal, and scholarship open to a graduate of the University. He won the same distinction in the M.A. Examination in English. He thus attained high academic distinction.

During these years of strenuous labour he resorted, at times, to healthy places such as Puri, Mussouri, Simultala to refresh himself. Each of these places did him much good and gave him strength to cope with the difficulties of his examinations. After he had completed his academic career, his health improved considerably and he looked a decent healthy youngman of his age.

Bishnu Charan led a very simple life. His needs were few. He had no taste for the items of fashionable life. He was courteous and sincere ; very obedient to his father ; true to himself and mindful of his duties. He was not very social, yet not proud. He had a quiet but effective personality with a pure and noble heart. He had no attraction for money, no hankering after name and fame. He was averse to marriage and lived a pure life.

Shortly after his M.A. Examination, he was appointed a Lecturer in English in Dacca University, where he was soon appreciated as a valued member of the staff. He was also doing research work there in view of a thesis for the Ph.D. degree. It was about this time that he was writing the life of Vijaykrishna. He was already religiously disposed. When a boy of fifteen years, he became a disciple of Swami Kiranchand Darbeshji of Benares, whom he regarded as his sole guide in life. Darbeshji gave colouring to his life. In writing Vijaykrishna's life, Bishnu Charan was unconsciously advancing in the path of religion. His whole heart was now bent towards Vijaykrishna. He observed the birth ceremony of Vijaykrishna on a grand scale. This was the first and last social function which Bishnu Charan performed in life. A few months after, one evening he was suddenly attacked with a severe pain in the stomach; after the surgical operation, the doctors diagnosed the pain to be due to acute Pancreatitis. On the seventh day of the attack, Bishnu Charan died. Thus ended prematurely a highly promising life. He left the book incomplete. If he had been spared for some time more, he would have added at least two chapters to complete it, and would have revised it with some additions and alterations here and there. But God disposed otherwise. The book has been printed from the copy of the draft he left.

When the author's Gurudev, Swami Kiranchand Darbeshji, went through the manuscript, and found the book unfinished, he was in a fix. He was eager to introduce to the reading public this philosophical study of his Master's life and the last thoughtful work of his beloved disciple; but his mind shrank from bringing it out in such an incomplete form. While he was thinking over the matter, the name of one gentleman suddenly occurred to him as quite fit for the task of completing the work. This gentleman is Shri Akshaya Kumar Banerjea, M.A., Professor of Philosophy, Ananda Mohan College, Mymensingh, and a disciple of the great *yogi,* Baba Gambhirnathji of Gorakhpur, with whom Goswami Vijaykrishna had an inner bond of spiritual comradeship. Prof. Banerjea respectfully submitted to the request of Darbeshji, and added the last three chapters to the book, so as to bring it to the finish.

Further, on the request of Darbeshji, Dr. S. K. Das, M.A., Ph.D., Lecturer of the University of Calcutta, who is a disciple of Mata Jamunamayee, a sister-in-faith of Darbeshji, undertook the very laborious task of compiling a beautiful and thorough Index for the book.

We place the book in the hands of the interested readers, with the prayer that the true spirit of Vijaykrishna's life of love and devotion may reveal itself to their inquisitive hearts through this small treatise.

17th August 1940,
One hundredth Birthday
of Sree Vijaykrishna

JOGANAN DAS

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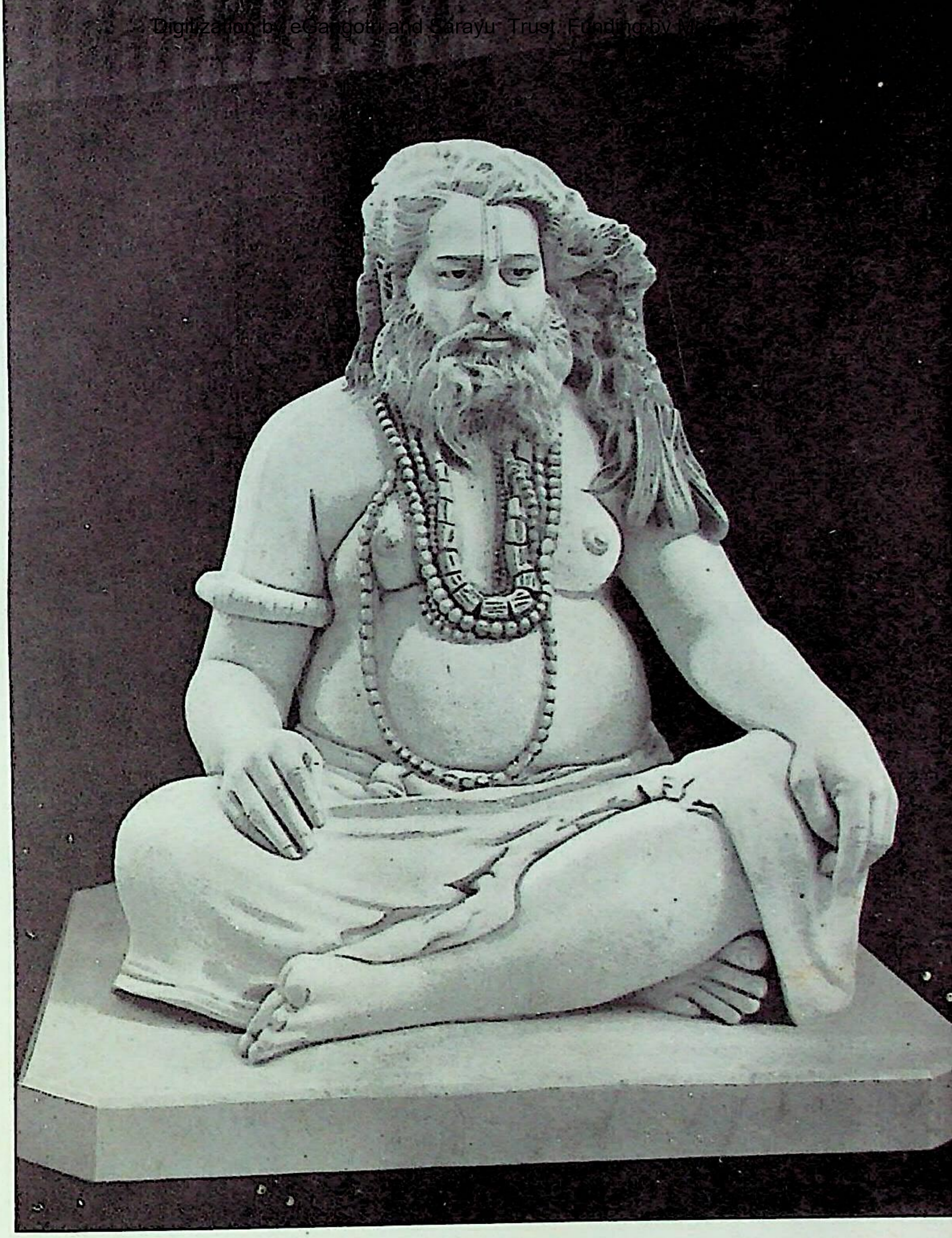

SAINT VIJAYKRISHNA

BORN
2nd AUGUST, 1841

DIED
4th JUNE, 1899

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PRELUDE

The life of Vijaykrishna is grand and infinitely sweet too. He was a mighty red-hot furnace with leaping flames of spiritual fire,—a revelation of that cosmic joy of which poets and bards have sung both in the Orient and the Occident. Gifted with a mystical vision that looks beyond the flesh, he realized that we are all bound for Heaven which is our common destination, however much we may be divided into camps and develop party prejudices here on earth. We are all emanations from God, Who is the real source of Life and Light, and to God we must return, although there may be different paths for us to traverse in our mundane journey to Him. The incompatibility disappears as soon as our vision is widened ; for all paths lead to Rome.

The vastness of his soul embraced the bizarre multiplicity of all orders and faiths and discovered their inner unity. From personal experience gained by his long and varied course of *Sadhana,* he was able to assert that the direct unmediated knowledge of the Absolute Reality, which is also identical with the illuminated consciousness of the spiritual unity of man and the universe, is the core of all religious discipline as understood by the *Rishis* and prophets who visualised and gave expression to the great truths co-eternal with God, and proclaimed with unshaken confidence that all the apparent diversities of our experiences are ultimately nothing but *"Satyam-Jnanam-Anandam"*. A dispenser of dogmas Vijaykrishna never was. He adored equally all sects and creeds which have honeycombed the religious life of

India and the world. It is evident that he grasped the kernel of truth underlying all religions, which are but the different facets of the one Great Mirror. The *Atman* in him was in a highly illumined state, free from the overshadowing influences of *Maya,* and consequently he was consciously at one with the Divine. His whole life was a clear manifestation of the working of the gospel of truth and a crystal-clear self-expression of a great soul thoroughly impregnated with the Divine Power, which is dynamic in its character and which is equally operative in the whole cosmic process as well as in every unit of energy and in every unit of phenomenal existence, the difference being one of degree and not of essence or kind. This Divine Power made its appearance in a concentrated form in the life of the great personality, of which we want to have a glimpse in this small treatise. It is this Power which guided his life from the plane of the Universal Spirit. This means that our Master was a superman.

I do not like to deal with the life of our Master as an isolated factor in India's religious life, for his life was a timely re-interpretation and a brilliant embodiment of Synthetic Mysticism, which India and the world need so much in the present day. I see in him the regeneration and re-awakening of the essentially spiritual view of human life and mundane phenomena that has cast a halo of glory about Mother India from time immemorial. If the Master had any desire or mission to form a religious camp, placing himself as the leader of a great army raising the dust and din of battle, we could have declared him to be a religious crusader. But he was a preacher of the gospel of dynamic universal Love and Service and the essential divinity of all created beings, which the soul of India has been teaching the world from the Vedic times and the aim of which has always been to raise men above the plane of egoism, sectarianism, dogmatism and fanaticism. He was a true representative of Hindu *Sadhana* in the modern age. Vijaykrishna began with the unmanifested *Nirguna* and then passed to the realization of the manifested *Saguna*. At the third stage of the mystic way, he arrived at the Chaitanyaite gospel of Love—Love that plays the most effective part in the human drama, which is the greatest portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit and for which Dante suffered as few ever did. Sree Chaitanya embodied Love at its purest and finest, and the manner in which he reclaimed the two notorious rakes of the time, for whom no sin was impossible, shows the magic touch and transmuting effect of Love—Love which is here a world-regenerator, the beacon-light, the bright effulgence in an atmosphere of thickening gloom and brooding darkness.

The realization of the unmanifested *Nirguna* overwhelms the *Sadhaka* with a sense of the sublime and the transcendent, and it is ordinarily held that "the sublime is incompatible with charms". In between the realization of the transcendental undifferentiated *Brahman* and of the Infinite in the human form, there comes the conception of *Paramatman* with the *Saguna* and *Nirguna* aspects, both in one. In that the Master revived the faith and teachings of Chaitanya. All that he did and said in the latter half of his life, may be linked to Chantanyaism, the first half being a period of preparation and experimentation for this magnificent spiritual flowering of his *Sadhana*. But I would not stop at merely showing the spiritual relation of the Master to the Chaitanya Movement, for I find no yawning gulf between the Master and the many saints and savants before him, who have added to the spiritual glory of Mother India and laid in stock, by their achievements, precious gems which made her the cynosure of the world. Even if there had been hedges between the Master's faith and that of any other Indian saint, those hedges melted away before him, for he welcomed all, hailed all. No sects were denied their just claims to recognition by him ; nay, he saw no sharp and clear line of demarcation between one sect and other, for—as I have already said—he only saw *'chemin qui marche'* (the road that marches) as Pascal has beautifully said. We shall see, as we shall discuss his life at greater length, that even when, to all outward appearances, he separated himself from the Brahmo Samaj (the Unitarian Church of Bengal, a new religious experiment in modern India), he proclaimed himself to be at bottom a Brahmo, with a synthetic outlook, and his mind saturated with the gospel of the Unitarian Brotherhood. A true Brahmo he was to the end of his life, and his Brahmoism, which meant a religion identical with Truth, was the foundation upon which "that Diamond Harbour of the soul was built, full of ecstasies and sweet emotions". The jarring elements of the different religions of the world, were by him fused into a royal harmony ; and only the broad-minded and catholic can see a serene peace and infinite sweetness, in the midst of conflict and confusion. Our Master could see that, and that is why I have given him my love.

Vijaykrishna never held the individualistic notion of his own salvation, and in the modern world we feel that love for God has very little meaning in it, if not coupled with love for humanity. His religion embraced the suffering humanity and the wide world within its arms, and he was ordained by God to be the saviour of thousands who were sick of the world and its ways and yearned for a life of peace and harmony. And it is for the sake of humanity that he descended from the high solitary peaks of transcendent self-enjoyment and sympathised with the life of the masses of the lower planes. His greatness is all the more on the score that living in the world for the sake of humanity, he could keep the world and its noises at a distance, just as in the battlefield of Kurukshetra Sree Krishna, the great charioteer, and Arjuna, the great *Kshatriya* hero, spun the thread of Ariadne to guide the men of the world through the labyrinth of metaphysics and ideology in the Hindu *Shastras,* which are more knotted than the knotted locks of Shiva. The tumult and uproar of enormous odds, and the monstrous sound of battling and shielding, could never shake them ; they created, as it were, an oasis in a desert, a steady and sane oracle amidst all the deliriums of mankind. It was they that really wore a suit of arms: the armed soldiers who were lost in the tumult were merely dressed in cobwebs. Vijaykrishna was destined to show in his life how he could be an ideal *Sannyasin*—a *Sannyasin* untouched by the world, though living and moving in it like the lovely lotus which is never wetted by water though always playing with it.

There is always a divine aura round a saint, and consequently many supernatural phenomena become always manifest round about him. Supernatural occurrences are numerous in the life of the Master, but of purpose, I have generally avoided them, for they are not acceptable to the modern man in this age of science, when we are talking science, reading science, and breathing the air of science. With the advance of rational thought, there has indeed been a mighty conflict between Reason and Faith. And when, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, there was the steady advance of scientific thought, rationalism became the philosophy in office, so to speak. To dislodge it, however, there was a series of reactions. However much the one may have tried to dethrone the other from the minds of men, the human mind oscillates and will ever oscillate between Reason on the one hand and Faith on the other. They are, so to say, the systole and diastole of the human heart in history. We have living and seeing intuition, only when we have an outlook with an equal measure of scientific doubt and trust in Providence. A great writer says that "this vital and penetrating intuition is the eye of Cyclops, which completes and never cancels the other two". It is a process of synthesis that we want. If we approach a religious life with a thoroughly rationalistic outlook, we shall miss a great deal of its sweetness ; nay, we shall not be able to realize this life in its true perspective, just as we cannot explain the existence of psychological life through the dissection of the bodily organs through which it vibrates invisible and unseen. An attitude of compromise may quiet many a mind, rendered sterile by hard scepticism, just as it quieted, to a certain extent, the Victorian conflict, the reactions against which are the Oxford Movement and the Mysticism of Carlyle. Cannot the two antithetical forms of spirit be wedded together?

It is not merely on this ground that I have omitted the supernatural phenomena in this great life. As he was a supreme *Bhakta,* those supernatural phenomena must always occupy an insignificant position in the scale of spiritual values, except illustrating the sublime and beautiful play of Divine Grace in the life of a devotee. Vijaykrishna was one of those saints, the finest flower of the sacred soil of India, who conceal their high spiritual powers as an old-fashioned woman conceals her money. Though a vast reservoir of spiritual energy, exercising mesmeric influence on those around him, his sweet and loving personality was high above his occult powers and he never sought to draw the attention of his admirers to any miracles that might occur in his life. He ever deemed himself to be the humblest of men, and he seemed not to see what people found in him, and why they paid him so much respect. He was always on bended knees with a heart full of humility and love before his beloved Lord, Who worked through him and Who in His *Lila* performed all the miracles in order to charm the people towards His transcendent all-loving spiritual glories.

Our study ot the Master's life of *Sadhana* will unfold to our vision a developing life of mysticism, a life of gradual ascent in the scale of spiritual values, experiences, and ideal. He showed in and through his life what *Sadhana* means, and in his memory were registered the pictures of his austerity, his experiences of the sweets and bitters of life, which were equally welcome to him—for, to the *Sadhaka* hankering after God, gall itself is turned into nectar, and the deep abyss and the dizzy heights are the same in the wonderful panorama of life. It is a trying situation, and the experience of the *Sadhaka* is no less awful than that of the mariner rounding the Cape of Storms. But while the trials are going on, the merciful hand of God showers His blessings upon the head of the *Sadhaka* ; the *Sadhaka* is convinced on countless occasions of the never-failing mercy, and that nerves him, and the 'Hound of Heaven' chases him, and "Naked he awaits Thy Love's uplifted stroke".

The stage of self-discipline and preparation over, the

Sadhaka finds himself immersed in unspeakable mystical bliss, and realizing the immanental unity of God, looks upon the Creation as a feast of Love and Sacrifice. Next. the *Sadhaka* is initiated into the cult of Love—the highest rung in the ladder which the 'climber upward' can hope for. With the descent of the Angel of Love from the blue sky to the lap of the Earth, everything begins to pulsate with a new life. The dress of moon-light shines more beautifully on the lush grass ; the untiring songsters pour forth their ceaseless strain of melody from the fragrant flower-shrubs ; the sudden spring-breeze rustles through the silent grove ; behind the grey of mist, the sun rises, and waves of silver, shot with sparks of crimson, begin their joyful dance in the eastern sky ; the visible screen is lifted up from every sight by an invisible fairy hand ; and the genial warmth of Love melts down the icy sentinel of the Arctic, streams of freedom come gushing forth, and the vagrant cascades, in their energetic eagerness to unite with the ocean, flow on merrily through the burning tracts of the desert that had so long replied in an arrogant 'No' to all human demands for relationship. The complexion of Krishna is of a piece with new summer-clouds sailing over the boundless blue, His cloth is yellow, His garland is a wreath of mystic maze, the eternal flute is ever in His hands, and He is in the form of a *Gopa*. When the Master attained this stage, tears coursed down his cheeks, his peals of laughter frightened his compeers and associates, the deeps of his heart were unlocked. Namdev, the great South Indian saint, said that in that very madness a devotee exhorts, "Run, jump, cry, laugh, sing ; emotional feeling wells up in spite of myself, why then let every man witness it." Our Master at this time actually talked with God off and on, and he realized that "the beautiful in the Infinite is represented in the human form". It is not the casual poetic glimpse of the film of the unseen and the eternal in the visible of the universe, but a holy and everlasting communion between God and the devotee, which fills the heart of the latter with supreme felicities and which, he knows, can alone remove that malaise which blights all sweetness under heaven. One of the very few—the salt of the earth—to whom such a vision is vouchsafed, was our Master, who not only felt very strongly that Godless life is a terrible vacuity but, realizing the Supreme Being from the absolute standpoint or the standpoint of the Infinite, according to the first sloka of the *Bhagabat Purana,* described Him not only as the Un-namable, the Boundless One, but also as the most Loving and Merciful One, ever drawing to His infinite bosom the hearts of men, worn out by the fret and fever and groan of life, in a voice of infinite sweetness and love, unheard and uncared for by the obtuse-minded wretched millions. The apparitions, of which Shelley speaks as visiting the interlunations of life in the case of such a love-mystic, constantly hovered before the Master's eyes, and he saw God everywhere—in the full-blown lotus in the lake, in the lilt of a bird's song, in the dewdrops 'turned to splendour' by the first rays of the sun, and in the holy face of his wife.

The Master lay continuously for hours in the highest state of *Samadhi* or supra-conscious state, when he communed with God, and he was actually seen by men who are still living and, by their deeds and writings, paying a glorious tribute to this sovereign personality. These men are not the simple fishermen of the Gospel story ; they are men of high station both in the worldly and spiritual sense. I have had many an occasion to hear such things personally from the mouths of these eye-witnesses, and I have placed implicit faith in what they have said, however much such things may be inacceptable to the avowed sceptics who, I know, are prone to thrust them to the domain of legend and mythology and declare them to have no connections with living reality. For, these things are scientifically proved, and this *Samadhi* of which I have spoken, is not auto-hypnotism or catalepsy but the union of the human spirit with the cosmic spirit, made possible by concentration and the disappearance of the consciousness of the ego and the submergence of the ego in self. "If this state of God-intoxication be a disease, the disease is welcome, for it is like a pearl in a pearl-fish, which is also called the disease of the animal." Wordsworth said that one impulse from the vernal wood is sufficient to inundate the shoals and shallows of existence and teaches us more of moral good and evil than all book-knowledge and the teachings of sages can. Likewise, one shining example of living religious experience and attainment, is infinitely more valuable than a plethora of scriptures, theory piled on theory. And it is for this that I have proceeded to this my present work. I know full well that to find this great well of humanity at which many will drink and drink to their heart's content, is a great duty. It will, I dare say, induce sweet repose in many a fevered soul that has murdered sleep.

And my voice is but an echo of the same old voices. The life of the Master is but a leaf taken out of the Bible of Humanity. Among my audience there may be people who may frighten me with the stare of unrecognizing ignorance or the yawn of over-familiarity. I feel for those who are lamentably ignorant of this gospel, and my consolation to my friends who know the gospel, the Bible of Humanity, is that the ground that is already trodden is here re-trodden, the story that is already told is here re-told, the song that is already sung is here re-sung, but it ever renews itself ; its great interest never palls. My friends who are acquainted with the Gospel story still remember that song, the music still vibrates in their memory, but none—I am pretty sure—can get fed up with this "great poem, as vast as the Indian Ocean, blessed, guilded with the sun, the book of divine harmony wherein there is no dissonance". For to tell the story of the Master is to tell the same Gospel story, to sing one or two snatches of the same divine song that is being sung eternally, to recite a part of that great poem.

I am at Puri. The sea, the image of eternity, is before me. It is into this furious Bay of Bengal that the Ganges and the magnificent rivers of Bengal are lost. And it is here at Puri with the raging waves by it that the river of the Master's soul re-entered the Ocean of the Being without beginning and without end. . . . .

But stop ! The Master is not gone. His work is not done. He is still in the pilgrimage of life, holding his lamp of truth to light the way of humanity.

B. C. D.

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CHAPTER I

THE EARLY LIFE OF THE MASTER

The hour of Vijaykrishna's birth was highly auspicious. It was a beauteous evening, calm and free, in the Bengali month of Srabana, 1248 B.S. The date was the 19th, corresponding to the 2nd day of August, 1841 A.D. The full moon was just peeping through the eastern sky. The western sky was flushed with the pink of the setting sun. It was then that Vijaykrishna was born. During the period of conception, the mother, Swarnamoyee Devi, had wonderful dreams, and she understood clearly that she was going to have a wonderful child. A drop of dew that gleamed in a blade of grass, the meanest flower that blew, gave her thoughts that often lay too deep for tears. She felt a new life in her every pulse. Now that Swarnamoyee bore a beautiful child on her lap, she was beside herself with joy. People were, however, surprised, when Swarnamoyee gave them a fantastic story of Vijaykrishna's birth. She said that as she took refuge in a solitary nook in the backyard of the house, she had labour pain and lay unconscious there ; and when she came to herself, she found the child in her arms. The placenta lay near, and consequently people jeered at Swarnamoyee, when she reiterated that the child was not delivered of her womb.

The Master was born at the house of Gouri Prasad Joddar, his grand-father on the mother's side, in the village of Dahakul near Shikarpur, in the district of Nadia, Bengal. The day Vijaykrishna was born, Gouri Prasad had to face a lot of troubles. The house was subjected to a close search by the Police, as a fellow, for whom Gouri Prasad, out of his innate generosity, had stood as security, absconded. It was an old orthodox family, and naturally Swarnamoyee took fright and retired to the backyard of the house. When the news of the child's birth got wind, the whole house resounded with cheers, notwithstanding that it was then in topsyturvydom.

As a child Vijaykrishna looked very beautiful with his clear skin, lovely flowing locks, and robust physique. The child was full of fun and mischief. He poked his nose into everything that took his boyish fancy. He used to steal butter and other eatables at home, and one day he had a fall, which left a bad scar on his chin. He used to lay traps on the way for those women who carried cream and butter to the market, and when they stumbled down, Vijaykrishna and his equally mischievous companions who were then in ambush, burst into a loud roar of laughter. Nobody then could, perhaps, foresee what was to become of this laughing child, what unfathomable depths lay hidden within his inner soul. For then his boyish pranks and mischief-making belied his soul's immensity. As he grew in years, he looked more and more beautiful, and he was petted and caressed by all women and girls in the neighbourhood. In the backward villages of Bengal, a tempest in a tea-pot is a daily occurrence, but even as a boy Vijaykrishna could spread such personal infection that his very presence in the scene shamed the noisy disputants into silence. People credited Vijay with having possessed some occult power, and consequently they approached him, whenever any one was taken ill, or a case was pending, or a difficulty of any complexion cropped up. By his precocity, he astonished all, as Jesus had astonished the Jewish doctors.

Vijaykrishna was given the name of Digvijay at the ceremony of his first taking rice, the principal food of the Bengalees. His name indeed conquered the four corners of the province even during his life-time. It thoroughly proved its appropriateness. The Great Conqueror he truly was. Everywhere he bore the victorious signal.

Vijaykrishna was a born devotee. At the name-giving ceremony the child took in his hands the *Bhagabata Purana* from among the various things presented to him. The most immediate and natural passion with him was love for the tutelary god, Shyam Sundar. As years rolled on, the divine impress of his soul became more and more manifest. The mother feared lest he should touch unawares the idol and thereby incur the displeasure of God, as he was not initiated then. Vijaykrishna's natural and spontaneous love for Shyam Sundar, which showed itself even now, reached its fruition late in his life, when he appeared as a spiritual son of Chaitanya and the most prominent preacher of His unique cult of love in this age of scientific self-aggrandisement.

Of the various paths of religion, the most difficult is the path of Love. The path is full of windings and lurking ambushes ; it is a trying uphill work ; but it finally leads to a moon-lit enchanted land where lovers assemble to frolic and gambol. That enchanted land is Brindaban, the land of Indian pastorals and of the Song of Songs. In His maddening love for Krishna, Chaitanya took the black waters of the sea, silvered over with the moon-light, for the Jumna, and the sand-hills on the sea-beach for

Gobardhan. This love transcendental is not achievable even when salvation is achieved. It transcends, and cares not for, salvation. The path of Love goes forward, when all other paths terminate and are lost. It proceeds along a precipice, and "from the precipices skirted by it, limitless horizons peep out". It was possible for our Vijaykrishna, our Ramakrishna, and for Christ to traverse it. Late in life, he lay on the ground, lost in artistic emotion for hours, in contemplation of the Beautiful One, at the sight of the crimson flare of the morn and burst into tears like a child that had lost its mother, tasting a sweet mango. As a child, what he did with Shyam Sundar, and what he prattled in little baby language were also astonishing. On the day of the Janmastami festival, as he heard the story of Sree Krishna's birth, he entered the temple, lovingly took Shyam Sundar in his arms, and poured milk into His mouth with the sincere affection of a mother. As the boy was denied access to Shyam Sundar, he first got angry with his mother, who would not concede to his importunate requests, and then with Shyam Sundar, Who would not open the door and give him admission. With a stick in hand for chastising the unruly Shyam Sundar, Who would not hear him and reciprocate his love, he waited at the door of the temple, hour after hour. At last the Brahmin *Pujari* (worshipper) came and entered the temple, but the boy had to return baffled. At this time, Vijaykrishna also loved the *Tulsi* plant, which is called the Indian Daphne.

Even as a child Vijayakrishna loved to dress himself as a *Sannyasin*. Late in life, he was destined to be a great *Sannyasin*, and even when he was seven or eight years old, he liked very much to put on a loin-cloth and bear on his person the distinctive marks of a Vaisnava. One day, Vijaykrishna was missing from the premises. The mother and the other relatives of the boy were in great anxiety. After a good search, the boy was found in the company of a *Sannyasin,* a short way from the house.

From the very beginning, Vijaykrishna had divine ecstasies. One day he was found sitting under a tree in a neighbouring orchard. He looked very beautiful, sitting as he was at the foot of the tree like a sylvan deity, his face beaming with divine effulgence, his eyes closed in meditation! This was perhaps his first ecstasy, and this ecstasy seized him very frequently in his after-life. As he was cradled in the legend of Krishna and the *Gopis* and as his father and mother were all pious Vaisnavas, and the family was noted for the Vaisnavic tradition, Vijaykrishna, then only six, listened with rapt attention to the stories of Dhruba and Prahlada, who were the most earnest devotees of the lotus-eyed Narayana.

Once in summer, the boy was gazing at the full moon with steadfast eyes. And he was carried like Ganymede by the Eagle, carrying the thunderbolt. The repeated cries of his relatives, however, brought him to his senses, and on being questioned as to what divine thoughts he was then enjoying, the boy replied,—"The disembodied soul of my father came to me and took me to the lunar sphere. What beautiful streams, hillocks, flower-gardens he showed me! Then he told me, 'O my dear boy, one of my descendants would be a great Vaisnava, another would be a great *Sannyasin*. Will you be able to become a great saint and be the upholder of the glory of the house of Adwaita?' And I answered, 'I ask for your blessings, the blessings of a father'." Who can think of a boy overcome with such emotion and replying in a trance to his dead father's queries? In spite of these transports, the child was not at all supernormal. But the relatives regarded them with fear, and the child was actually taken to a priest, who uttered charms and recited an incantation supposed to drive away the spirit afflicting him. The feet of Shyam Sundar were washed with a little water, which the boy was made to drink. The anniversary of the father's demise was henceforth duly observed. These transports only showed that the child was a divine child, that he came "trailing clouds of glory from God Who is our Home," that as a born *Bhakta*, he loved the things of beauty in the universe silhouetted on a background of the Eternal Verity.

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Vijaykrishna was put to the village *pathsala* at the proper age. There he had to face a strict disciplinarian, Bhagaban Sarcar. "Spare the rod, spoil the child", this was his motto. He was a man more terrible and sterner to view than ever was Goldsmith's schoolmaster in the village of Auburn. He was very often in a fit of anger and belaboured his pupils most mercilessly, in spite of their tender appeals and prayers. So he typified in his person the village schoolmaster of old in this country. To his pupils he was nothing short of a deadly spectre. "I knew him well and every truant knew." Not that Vijaykrishna used to play truant from school, but that, filled with the inner urge of life, he was very sprightly and did not love restraints like the little Mozart. But as he was extremely clever, he, from time to time, invited his master to his house for dinner and presented fine clothes and doles of rice to keep him in good humour. In his studies, he soon gave proofs of his uncommon intellect, and Bhagaban Sarcar soon found deserts in him.

Vijaykrishna loved his class-mates very dearly.

Once there was a virulent epidemic of cholera at Santipur, which took a death-toll of a large number of people, and some of Vijaykrishna's dear friends fell victim to it. Their sudden death was a rude shock to Vijaykrishna's soft heart, full of tender feelings for all. One day as he was going to the *pathsala* with tears in his eyes, he came to a spot, where, to his utter surprise, he heard the voices of his dead friends in a chorus. They asked him not to shed tears, as they were not dead but living. The truth of truths now dawned on Vijaykrishna's mind that death is but a transfiguration, and his friends, though dead physically, were alive spiritually, and that he could hear their voices in the sounds of Nature. Poet Shelley expressed the same idea in 'Adonais': "The Spirit thou lamentest is not gone." Vijaykrishna went to his teacher and told him all about it. The old teacher thought that his playful boy was joking with him. With his lips puckered up and fiery rolling eyes, he was going to beat his little pupil. Vijaykrishna, however, persuaded the old teacher to accompany him to the spot, and he also heard the voices of his pupils in a chorus. Even a person that denies the pre-natal and ante-natal existence of the soul, cannot but believe in such a situation. Our Horatio-like scepticism melts away, and we 'let belief take hold of us'. Out of deep affection, the *Guru Mahashaya* kissed the little marvellous boy again and again.

Even as a boy Vijaykrishna was a monument of morality. We cannot speak too highly of Vijaykrishna's lofty moral sense. In the realization of the immanental unity of the divine, morality is perhaps the first stage. There are stages which must be got over: even Spinoza speaks of the degrees of perfection. Vijaykrishna also began from the beginning. It was a burning passion for truth. Love of truth absorbed the whole of his being, and he felt for those who deviated, either in thought or in action, from truth: for truth, he knew, is our only sheet-anchor in the sea of life. There are people in this world—and their name is legion—who tell lies right and left, and such men, as somebody has said, are cowardly towards men and brave towards God. It is in our true selves, naked and without the mask of falsehood, that God is most imaged. The Master's early life crowds with very many incidents which show without the least shadow of doubt that he had, from the initial stage of his career, a burning passion for truth ; and he knew no veneer, no sugar-coating, never in life anything, which we may call sailing under false colours. Once in a sword-play, he happened to strike a poor boy with a knife. The wound was deep and it bled profusely. Vijay's companions were alarmed and took to their heels. But Vijay stood firm and began to attend on him, and when the boy's mother came, he made a clean breast of everything, fearless of consequences. On another occasion, Vijaykrishna with a number of followers at his back, stole a horse from the stable of the Deputy Collector, Iswar Ghoshal of Santipur and had a good ride on it. The keeper of the horse seized them and brought them to the presence of the Deputy. The Deputy said in a rough angry tone, "It is you that stole my horse!" "It is I," returned Vijaykrishna without the least tremulation. On being further questioned as to why he took it into his head, to ride on his horse, Vijaykrishna replied that he did so, because he liked riding so much. The Deputy was so much pleased with him for this bold answer that he said, "Whenever you think of having a ride, come at once and see me. I will order the horse to be equipped with saddle and trappings."

Vijaykrishna's life is, from the beginning, a life of crystal sincerity and unassuming simplicity. Simplicity is perhaps the greatest of moral virtues. It is conspicuous by its absence in modern life. "Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent under it"—this famous saying uttered by Lady Macbeth, a woman of diabolical nature, in course of her speech to the conscience-stricken hesitating doer, her husband, has made a special appeal to the modern mind. And what we find generally around us, are rank insincerity, hollow promises, empty demonstrations, and assumption of mock-modesty and of a genial complacent exterior, for the time being for personal gains. Young Vijaykrishna was sincerity and simplicity incarnate, and when later he scaled the heights of Hindu *Sadhana,* he could very easily translate into reasoned convictions this his spontaneous faith. From the fount of sincere faith, emerges the river of religion, growing beautiful and expanding in volume as it flows, slaking the parching thirst of many souls, and fertilizing many lives, barren and covered with lichen, and leading to 'the ocean of the conscious, realized, and mastered Being'. Wherever there is the want of this feeder, the river of religion shrinks to its bed, and flakes and shallows appear in it. Sincerity is, (in the words of Shakespeare, used in another context), "the rich fount from which my life springs or else dries up." The primeval force that motivates a religious life, is sincerity, and our Master had this sincerity to an eminent degree. Wherever there is sincerity, there is also moral courage ; and moral courage is the noblest form of courage that a man can possess. While in the modern world traditional morality is at a discount, and the blind follower of Kant regarding Life for Morality, has performed a somersault, here is the man before us, shining through the mists of about a century, who has not tabooed the old-world morality but freeing it from the mesh of academic abstractions, has practised it in life not for the sake of itself but because it imparts the *elan vital* to one's personal and social life.

At one time, a large number of people flocked to Santipur, on the occasion of a bathing ceremony at the Ganges. In the congregation, there were many scurvy people who made eyes at the women bathing at the ghat. This angered Vijaykrishna most, and in the red flames of righteous indignation, he imposed upon himself the sacred duty of training these people in the school of discipline. At this time popular feeling rose against him, and some people even resolved to beat him very severely if found at a vantage. And once in the dark, they took his elder brother for him, and finding their mistake, they fled ; but this soon got wind, and they were ashamed of their conduct. The result of all this was the construction of separate bathing ghats for males and for females.

To young Vijaykrishna religion meant a spiritual certainty, offering him strength of character and making him work on the principle of "die to live." Where other people used to shrink back, this very picture of self-control and fearlessness under all conditions supplied by the Cosmic Power, stood up. The early life of the Master was concentrated on this single motto: there should be no defeat of the spirit ; there is nothing like the defeat of the spirit. There may be defeat in outer life, but the spirit is not to be cowed down. "The waves on the shore may be broken, the ocean conquers nevertheless." Very early in life, Vijaykrishna had contact with the wickedness and perfidy of this hard world, and we shall see that as years went on, he met with many adverse circumstances, but he was as calm as ever and saw with infinite pleasure how God plays for Himself the Comedy of the Universe ; how this variegated world is a presentation of the various attitudes of the playful God. Nothing, no obstacle, could deter him in carrying out the work he had mapped out for himself.

Vijaykrishna was an extremely soft boy and retained in his heart kindly feelings for all. Once at the brutal sight of a dove done to death by a fowler, he set up a loud scream of horror. He took to his bosom the little bird gasping for life, but it died at once. The sight of Vijaykrishna, shrieking in a most frantic manner for the death of the dove, was a heavenly astonishment to the fowler. He felt the contrast so acutely and was so stung to the quick that he gave up his profession for ever.

Some zemindars of Bengal are often found to act like Shylock, and they were more so half a century back. The poor defaulters were subjected by them to brutal tortures. The reports of such tortures filled Vijaykrishna's veins with fever. There arose a storm in his bosom, which threw him off his feet. Once when a tenant was being cudgelled by a zemindar, he made his appearance upon the scene all on a sudden and in a stentorian voice, said, "Ye ruffian, won't you stop this cruel business? The poor fellow is half-dead. Stop or I will intervene." He was so excited that he fell to the ground unconscious. The zemindar had to stop and let his victim go. At another time, unable to restrain himself, he fell upon a zemindar and lashed him for rack-renting the peasants and treating them in a cruel manner, as though they were his slaves, who must crouch before him in order to live. Vijaykrishna was so utterly on the side of liberty, sanity, and purity that he did not mind seeming at times rather hard, and he simply wondered how the zemindar could bring himself to do what he did, how he could choose to sacrifice humanity for the sake of base lucre, and there could be no human relations between him and his ryots save the cash nexus.

Vijaykrishna formed a society, placing himself as the leader ; and the mission of that society was to do humanitarian work and mend the character of wicked people. In mid-summer, water-reservoirs were erected by this society at different places at Santipur, and the weary wayfarers were given drinking water. In the matter of moral uplift, the society rendered a good account of itself. Once he took a rowdy boy on a boat and, in mid-stream, threatened to drown him, unless he promised to turn over a new leaf. Where gentle admonition failed, Vijaykrishna had to be rather strict and unyielding. The fellow was frightened out of his wits and from that day, he became a changed man.

The women that came to Santipur on the occasion of the *Rash-yatra* of Sree Krishna, were very often open to the onslaughts of the wicked people, and Vijaykrishna did his best to keep sharp watch on them and resist their brutal advances. In order to test Vijaykrishna's morality, a charlatan once came to him with his lips besmeared with wine. This could not elude Vijaykrishna's penetration, and he slapped the fellow sharply on the face. Vijaykrishna's lesson was not lost upon him. The fellow apologised for what he had done and was so penitent that he brought his passions under control ; and late in life, when he turned a *Sadhu* and met Vijaykrishna, he thanked his old benefactor and told him that he owed him a debt which could never be paid back, for it was he that made him what he became. Thus was foreshadowed the magnetic personality as well as the moral strength possessed by our Master, and in this work of the reformation of Santipur, the holy seat of the Goswamis, we seem to see the first chapter of the Bible of Love and Harmony.

CHAPTER II

THE IMMACULATE PARENTAGE

Vijaykrishna was the tenth descendant of the great Adwaitacharya, whose name had consecrated Santipur. It is the universal belief in Vaishnava circles, that Adwaitacharya's intense heart-ache at the sight of the degraded condition of the people around him, and his earnest call to the Divine for mercy, brought about the incarnation of God as Sree Chaitanya at a time when the moral and spiritual atmosphere of Bengal, as represented by Navadwipa, her cultural centre, was vitiated by logical and metaphysical wranglings on the one hand and grossly superstitious beliefs and practices on the other,—the people in general pinning their faith to crude religious dogmas, sense-pleasing rites and ceremonies, and false ideals and aspirations, without any dynamic spirit of love and devotion and self-surrender to the Absolute Truth, which is the very essence of religion, and which alone makes religion not something extraneous, something imposed from outside, but a thing pertaining to the innermost self of man and leading to the perfect fulfilment of the most essential demands of human nature and the enjoyment of eternal bliss. The current of Divine Love,—*Prema-Bhakti*—which was so closely associated with the house of the Goswamis of Santipur for several generations, was in course of time at a low ebb. But Vijaykrishna's father, Anand Kishor, was one of those whom the French would call *bien nes*. In fact, his intellectual gifts and spiritual endowments were rather peculiar and uncommon. The fund of scriptural knowledge he had at his command, was simply phenomenal. He lived in strict orthodox style and could never connive at any breach of the pious Hindu rites. While reading the *Bhagavata Purana,* he shivered from head to foot, his hair stood on end, tears ran down his cheeks, and he lost himself in divine ecstasy. His two wives died one after another, and in advanced age, he wedded a third wife, Swarnamoyee Devi, who bore him a son named Braja-gopal. After the birth of Braja-gopal, Anand Kishor undertook a solemn pilgrimage to Puri, which is sacred to every Hindu and more so to a pious Vaisnava of Anand Kishor's stamp on account of the world-famed temple of Jagannath. Before starting, he took a solemn vow that he would perform the journey on foot, however long and dangerous it might be. He always depended on God's mercy and worked towards attaining His grace. It is a fact that, out of sincere piety, he fell prostrate on the ground, measured his body each time, and then again fell prostrate, and so on. This told severely upon his health ; he became extremely emaciated, he had big sores on his knees and breast, but the spiritual desire was so strong in him that the bodily ailments were left unheeded. While he saw Lord Jagannath in the temple, the Lord appeared to be standing with all His transcendent glories before him and the love-intoxicated devotee lost himself in bliss.

On his return from Puri, Anand Kishor was blessed with another child. The birth of the child was preceded by some miraculous events and spiritual experiences, which led the parents to think of the child as not born of them in the natural course, but as having a divine origin. This was Vijaykrishna, the apple of Anand

Kishor's eye, the star of the Goswami family of Santipur, and the most glorious descendant of the house of Adwaita. There was something in the child which captivated the heart of the father and attracted the loving attention of all who approached him. The initiation of a child into the practice of taking solid food is regarded by the Hindus as a solemn occasion and is celebrated in every Hindu household, with a prayerful attitude as well as with pomp and eclat. When the child Vijaykrishna was first given the *prasad* of Shyam Sundar, Anand Kishor burst into tears in excess of delight. The invited guests, unable to plumb the depths of his feelings, said, "Why are you shedding tears on such an auspicious day? This bodes no good to the child." Neither the father nor the guests had any idea that, in return for the material food which the child was going to take, he was destined to give the world something which would nourish the souls and minds of countless men and women for a long period to come.

Anand Kishor breathed his last, when Vijaykrishna was a mere child. After his departure to the land of final beatitude, he appeared before his son several times in spiritual body. Gopi Madhav, the elder brother of Anand Kishor, expressed a wish in his death-bed that his wife should adopt one of Anand Kishor's sons. This had been long before Anand Kishor married Swarnamoyee. Anand Kishor replied, "What means this? I am a widower." But the elder brother replied, with a sweet smile playing on his lips, "You are destined to have two sons. Somehow or other I have learnt this. One of them will be my wife's foster-child." In compliance with this proposal, Vijaykrishna was given over to Krishna Moni, the wife of Gopi Madhav. Anand Kishor did not live to carry this into execution. Vijaykrishna loved his own mother, Swarnamoyee, so much that he was never happy with Krishna Moni. And their relations ceased, as the new mother met with sudden death soon after. The love of lucre drew one wicked relation of hers, who wove a tissue of lies and intrigue and misappropriated her property. Vijaykrishna, whose plane of living was even then much higher than that of ordinary men, cared not for a penny. The wicked relation put forward the boy's disobedience to his foster-mother as a strong argument against his inheriting her property and went so far as to deprive Vijaykrishna of the right of performing her funeral ceremony.

In Swarnamoyee, there was a combination of qualities very rarely to be found in the same measure in any woman. Her character had a wonderful force and presented a human document of the most interesting, though somewhat puzzling, type. She could irradiate peace and serenity on all. Her private charity was simply unbounded. A poor woman once demanded of her a good cloth. She had no cloth to spare at that time. So she gave away the cloth she had on and herself put on a tattered rag. At another time, she gave away her own wrapper to a poor boy, although she herself had no winter clothes save this wrapper. Once, owing to the outbreak of fire, a courtesan lost her all. That woman, though looked down upon by others, did not fail to win Swarnamoyee's warm sympathy and love. To the amazement of all, Swarnamoyee entertained her at her own house. While practising charity, she gave away her all and never thought what would become of her on the morrow. Swarnamoyee was not very scrupulous about recognizing the artificial distinctions between man and man, for she knew that the differential treatment accorded to people in society was bound to rankle in their hearts, and to demoralise the high and the low alike. To her, the poor were always deserving of hospitality irrespective of their caste or creed or sex, simply because they were poor. Their distress drew tears from her eyes, and this was because her heart spontaneously identified itself with their sufferings. The women that came to Santipur from the neighbouring villages to sell their vegetables at the market on the bazaar days, had to return home at noon under the burning sun. They had also to pass long weary hours without food. Such women were hospitably received by Swarnamoyee, and occasions were not rare, when she gave them away even her own food. She disposed of the furniture of her house in her zeal for charity. She was not well-off and hence she could not have enough and to spare after such gifts. She felt so very happy, when able to bring a morsel of bread to a hungry beggar, that she did not mind being penniless herself. She made no distinction between her own son and the son of her maid-servant. She was always very sympathetic towards misers, for she used to say, "Oh, they starve themselves. They must be well-fed. They are to be pitied." The food that she cooked for herself everyday was always more than what was needed for her subsistence. Daily she used to scatter grains before birds and feed the inferior animals. While purchasing articles, she never liked bargaining. She trusted others with a sincere heart and offered any price the sellers demanded. One day, while Vijaykrishna was bargaining with a wood-seller over the price, the wood-seller said, "Please ask your mother, she is the party to be consulted." The wood-seller knew that, while Vijaykrishna was offering the just price, his mother would pay him in excess. People never hesitated to sell articles of any value to her on credit. She once went on a pilgrimage to Puri and spent a large sum of money in charity. Once in winter when in Calcutta, she was going to Kalighat with her grandson. On the way, she happened to see a distressed woman, evidently a prostitute, standing near a street-light without proper clothes. She told pathetically to Swarnamoyee that she had absolutely nothing for the morrow, and that she had to sell herself to others for money. Swarnamoyee gave away her all with the result that she had not the wherewithal to go home. At the station her grandson asked for money, but she quietly replied, "I have spent all." "How to go home then?" asked the astonished grandson. But expostulations cut no ice with her. The grandson wondered very much at the queer reply of his exceptionally kind-hearted grandmother. With great difficulty, he procured money from somewhere and then took her to Santipur.

Swarnamoyee was an ardent worshipper of Shiva ; and while she went to Benares, 'the City of God', she presented to Lord Shiva a *Champak* flower of gold. While she was engaged in her devotional exercise, her whole person became radiant, and in excess of emotion, she recited very fluently many beautiful Sanskrit hymns. In all these, Swarnamoyee was so much out of the ordinary that people, at times, jeered at her and called her mad. She had occasional paroxysms of insanity ; at other times, she was perfectly sane. The poor people who profited by her magnanimity, respected her most.

A peculiar woman Swarnamoyee was.

CHAPTER III

THE PHASE OF VEDANTISM

After the death of Bhagaban Sarcar, Vijaykrishna studied in the Sanskrit *tol* under Banamali Bhattacharyya and impressed his learned teacher by his profound erudition and versatile genius. In the Bengali year 1266, Vijaykrishna, after finishing his studies in the *tol,* came to Calcutta with his friend, Aghor Nath Gupta, for the study of the Vedanta in the Sanskrit College, which was then the greatest educational institution in Bengal.

Calcutta at that time was the centre of various religious controversies and factions. The western influence invaded Indian cultural life considerably ; and Calcutta, the great metropolis, became, so to say, an uncharted and boundless stream with rapids and whirlpools. Vijaykrishna had to swim at the mercy of chance at this dangerous stream. Young graduates that came out of the Hindu College, tried to buy name and fame by burning incense under the nose of the Anglicists whose mouthpiece was Lord Macaulay. We know Macaulay's famous dictum that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia". Dr. Duff's testimony was no less interesting. With an almost comic zeal for exaggeration like Macaulay, he said, "The magnificent court of Ghuzni is a sea, and a sea without bottom or shore. I have fished it long but have found no pearl." The so-called educated men killed their time by devouring the shilling-shockers, and characterized by nonchalant self-indulgence and freed from the safe anchorage of old orthodoxy, they gathered in clubs and societies where they "waded their way to liberalism through tumblers of beer". The story is told of some liberty-drunk young men that the young liberals with the old faith bleached out of them and grinning at all those ideas that form the connotation of the term Divine, bought from the bazar some roast meat and having partaken of it, threw the remnant into the yard of the adjoining house owned by a sacerdotal Brahmin amidst the shouts, 'Beef! Beef'. The Brahmin took the law into his hands, but fell between two stools and knocked his head against a third. Standing face to face with this world of destructive revolutionism, of which Calcutta was an epitome, the young enthusiast remained unmoved. The new-fangled ideas with which the atmosphere of Calcutta was surcharged, could not affect him ; but as a result of the study of the logical arguments of the Vedanta, there was a complete metamorphosis in him.

The Vedanta, as he then understood it, led him to a conception of Reality which could not be compatible with the devout and loving worship of Personal God, for such a God is not the ultimate Reality. According to the Vedanta, the Divine is really in you, and the difference between God and Man is not essential, but merely of name and form. Excepting the difference of name and form, there is no difference at all. The Vedantist thinks that all he sees around him is *Maya,* and to try to unfasten the knot of *Maya* is like striving to undo the web of Penelope. The Gordian knot must be cut. We are to negative all passing things of our normal experience, which are, in truth, illusory and unreal in spite of their glittering surface-features, if we are to get at the One Reality, the Immutable Truth, the Undifferentiated and Unconditioned

Brahman, and no sooner are we able to realize the One Reality behind the phantom shadows than all things become God, in the sense that nothing but impersonal attributeless *Brahman* is then experienced as truly existent. The Stream of Illusion is to be charted by us, keeping our heads above the billows threatening to swallow us up, and our race is not run till the source is found—the source which is as inscrutable and obscure as the source of Mother Ganges. Every one of us is God in his essential or real nature. If the common grain of earth predominates, it is a fault of ours,—a fault which is inexcusable and irremediable and which is the cause of our craft sinking in the boisterous billows of life. It is the sum-total of the individual *Samskaras* that overlay the mind-stuff, and it is according to these *Samskaras* or impressions that we sojourn in higher or lower planes. Thus it is that we have the *Atman* in bondage which we call the *Jiva.* And we are merged in the One Unit Existence, and the cycle of births and deaths ceases, when the momentum of past work is exhausted, just as the current that comes out of the dynamo, returns to it after completing the circuit.

The uncompounded essence of which, like the Miltonic angels, we are made, is hidden by the obstructions of illusory materiality. Like diehard realists in the world of commerce, we are running after baubles and have lost consciousness of the Infinite Self, in Whom everything merges itself, and from Whom everything emanates like the myriad streams rising from the same source. In this one all-comprehending existence, one appears as manifold. The Self, in the language of Vivekananda, is like one of the cars of the Chicago Ferris wheel, which is in motion all the time, but the occupants change. The Upanishads describe how there are two birds of golden plumage sitting on a tree. They are inseparable companions of each other. The lower bird tastes the fruits and more and more approaches the upper bird, in the hope of securing the splendid position. The upper bird does not taste the fruits which are outwardly so tempting but rotten to the core. The upper bird is *Paramatman* and the lower bird is *Jivatman*. So Vedantism proclaims this message of hope: O Man, don't grieve. You yourself are God. This closed vase, this building of mud-pies, is a necessary evil for a time, but the Spirit casts it off and is made one with the Universal Spirit.

When Vedantism preaches this message of hope, it was quite natural that it should capture the all-engrossing attention of a young intellectual like Vijaykrishna. The cult of strength and the gospel of the indivisible identity of Man with God, are bound to appeal to the intellectual ; and at this time our Master, deeply engaged in the study of the Vedanta and ever discussing with hot enthusiasm the different phases of this intellectual religion, embraced by some of his closest friends, was surely the victim of an intellectual repression. A few months ago he had been a typical Hindu devotee, a *Bhakta* in the truest sense of the term ; but now all his former beliefs were scattered like flotsam and jetsam, and in a most enthusiastic spirit, he determined to begin his life anew, according to the principles of Vedantism, then the religion after his own heart.

In his first enthusiasm he gave it a much higher place in the scale of mental values than the *Bhakti* cult, but very soon the reaction set in. His heart became dry, and he longed for something he knew not what. From day to day, his thirst increased, and nothing, no spiritual draught, could slake it. In the torrid zone of Vedantic intellectualism, the young blossoms of his God-realizations, nourished under the influence of ancestry and family tradition, seemed to wither away. The study of the Vedanta led him to discover a gulf between the personal and the impersonal God—a gulf which could not be bridged over. His abandoning the flute under the fingers of Krishna for the mental balance and the spiritual scale of the *Jnanin*, proved disastrous.

Things, however, would not have been so worse had he been a Vedantic *Sadhaka* or a practical Vedantist. A Vedantist has to proceed through the difficult path of self-discipline, if he is to get at *aparokshanubhuti*. It must be a difficult process, so that the rank and file who allow themselves to be charmed by illusory visions, may not get at it, and it is possible only for the little band of the elect, the small legion of *Sadhakas*, to undergo a long and painful process of self-realization, carefully shunning those sensual passions, for the gratification of which the world outside or the world of illusion caters. In the undifferentiated luminous region of *aparokshanubhuti*, which is something *sui generis*, there is the permanent unveiling of one's *swarupa* unlike our immediate and non-relational knowledge which ends when modalised consciousness ends. As Vijaykrishna did not attain *aparokshanubhuti*, after a time he found that his soul had grown languid, oppressed by the dead weight of discursive knowledge. Had he attained Vedantic intuition which is *ex hypothesi* much superior to knowledge, he would not have felt himself to be in the circle of fire and, at least for a period, he would have been classed with the virile personalities, the cloistered *Sadhakas* of rough discipline violently antipathetic to what they call the vapourish bubbles of love and emotion.

A Vedantist is an iron man, but a *Bhakta* is the white flower of love watered by love's tears. He is the centre of mystic storms, and through his tears, you can see the rainbow in the sky. 'This thou art', 'I am He', the cult of sinking one's self in the wonderful impersonality of the Being without beginning and without end, in the sexless soul, in 'It', could never bear good fruit in Vijaykrishna as in Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna was fascinated and worked upon by Tota Puri, that naked man with nerves of iron. Vijaykrishna loved, with the passionateness of a mother or with the consuming love of a comrade, the idol of Shyam Sundar, his God in human form. Likewise, Ramakrishna needed contact with the tangible and cognizable God and wanted to embrace the Mother, believing at the same time that the Mother and the Absolute are one. In both, the Vedantic influence was but a passing phase. It left both of them untouched just as, according to Vedantism, the passing clouds do not affect the eternal blue of the sky, which may be likened to the Self. Tota Puri, the terrible man of steel, standing like a giant before the delicate-bodied Ramakrishna with his feminine tenderness and dreaming eyes fixed on nowhere, was ultimately conquered, and his once disciple became his master. And the Vedantic influence over, the wilderness crossed, Ramakrishna clasped to his arms the very *Maya,* whom Tota Puri had taught him to fight and conquer, for he knew that the Divine Mother (*Nirguna Prakriti*) with her mischievous and yet winning smile (in the words of Ramaprasad) is the creator of this *Maya.* And in the case of Vijaykrishna, after this drought, came the fertilizing rain upon the arid soil of his mind, and the man, for whom it was impossible to live without prayers, now found in them a spacious field where he could unlock the deeps of his heart.

In Vijaykrishna as well as in Ramakrishna, Vedantism was not an altogether unnecessary experience, for, in the case of Ramakrishna, it made him cling all the more strongly to "Qualified Monism" (*Visistadwaitabad*), regarding the phenomenal universe (to quote his own words) as the web spun by the Spider (the Mother), regarding both the container and the contained as God himself, instead of regarding the Real Man and the Real Thing, stripped of name and form as the Absolute which the other credo teaches. In the case of Vijaykrishna, it proved conclusively that *Bhakti* was his dower and also enabled him to check the disease of growing Materialism in Calcutta (for, wherever Materialism raises its head, Vedantism is the proper remedy, and hence Swami Vivekananda preached Vedantism in America, the cosy seat of democracy and the land of the almighty dollar) and after that it prepared the way to his acceptance of Brahmoism, the religion of the Formless with attributes, by preaching the theory of the impersonality of Godhead and of the impersonality of the Real Man, who is identical with the sexless Self, the neuter 'It', making no invidious distinction. The sufferings of Vijaykrishna as a Vedantist were so awful because of his high stature as *Bhakta,* just as the measure of our happiness determines our susceptibility to misery.

We are not perhaps wholly correct when we say that Vedantism is an intellectual religion: the Formless of the Vedanta is capable of being realized only by burning intuition, even though the Formless is without attributes and beyond vision. The Vedantist has to feel that there *is* God, and that feeling, that revelation, is a terrible experience which transmutes our Being, maddens us, makes us renounce the earth with all her store of fleeting pleasures and riches, and lose ourselves in the One Reality without a second, from Whom we emerge, and notwithstanding that, we are the same Soul as appeared multiformed because of the operation of *Maya*. But in Vedantism, the highest rationalism and the highest representation of the feeling aspect in man, are not combined. It is the most profound philosophy, but is not the most wonderful heart.

At this crisis, Vijaykrishna had an occasion to go to the house of one of the disciples of his dead father at Rangpur, according to the family custom. An elderly lady, the disciple of his dead father, fell at his feet and cried, "O Lord, I am immersed in the sea of worldliness. Help me out of it, O Saviour." The words cut him to the quick. He was seized with alarm. A veil of darkness at once covered his blooming face. He explored the deep recesses of his heart, and there he found only dying embers of old faiths and practices, doubts and fears, disharmony of his own instrument with the Conductor's baton. He was full of hatred towards this cult of cheap *Guruism*. He felt himself to be incapable of undertaking to pilot the craft of another in the stormy billows of life, while his own was at stake. He was essaying in vain to mount up to the unconditional state, in search of the permanent reality. He was daily more and more exhausted, and there were moments when he was so full of despair that he gave himself up for lost. But at the last rough halting place, he heard an ethereal voice—"Think, O Man, think of the hereafter". In a tense state of mind, he reached his abode and was down with high fever.

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Now Vijayakrishna went to Bogra to the house of one of the disciples of his father. There he came in contact with three Brahmos, whose ideal character impressed him most. But he felt no inner urge to accept Brahmoism. He returned to Calcutta, and there adversity stared him in the face. In the hostel, his room-mate stole away all his money, with the result that Vijaykrishna had to starve for days together. He walked about in the streets of Calcutta without a morsel of bread and without asking for any one's help. At last, he approached Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Maharshi (Saint) Devendranath, the two great personalities famous for their charity and beneficence. But they refused to help him, as bitter experience had a little disillusioned them and roused in their minds a sort of prejudice against indiscriminate charity. Vijaykrishna at that time was a stranger to them, and had they known him, they would certainly have helped him. Thus passed several nights. Help always comes—although we know not through what channel it does—to such a person who looks up to God alone for help and guidance. At length, seeing his pale face and hungry looks, a gentleman offered him a four-anna bit, and as he was going to purchase some food with it, perchance he saw his room-mate pass by. He looked very weak and depressed. Vijaykrishna ran up to him and inquired into the cause of his grief. His room-mate was also without food for some days, as he had lost all the money he had stolen, in gambling. Vijaykrishna sympathised with the poor sufferer and forgetting the wrong-doing, actually clasped him to his bosom. "His pity gave ere charity began." He brought him to a shop and shared with him the food he purchased. In a few days, his circumstances seemed slightly better, and he hired a portion of the house of one Becharam Chattopadhyaya. While living there with his class-mate, he did not enjoy peace of mind, for Becharam was addicted to drinking ; and he and his associates tried to induce him to their habit. At this, Vijaykrishna reprimanded them so sharply that they durst not drink in his presence any longer.

Vedantism, that great religion, whose rationale is the oneness and sameness of the Supreme Soul, and which gives us a wonderful system of ethics in the shape of love for fellow-men and scorns, with all vehemence, the little ego, the little sense-world of three days' duration, infused into Vijay its true spirit. But where to find that tranquil bliss which he had enjoyed before, was the question.

The clouds soon parted, and the merry face of the sky peeped out. He saw before him a new and soothing light which was destined to beckon him to a field of intense religious activity, where his mind might regain its complacency and work unhindered. That light was the Brahmo Samaj—The New Theistic Church of India.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW THEISTIC CHURCH OF INDIA

The Brahmo Samaj gave Vijaykrishna a retreat from the arid intellectualism of the Vedanta, and the river of his soul flowed once more with a soft inland murmur like the Ganges through the sleeping hamlets to the distant lights of Calcutta. The first Samaj meeting he attended gave him a thrill—a thrill intense and electric in its effect.

It was Wednesday. That evening there was an august gathering. Nothing is achieved unlaboriously. The noble achievements of the Samaj had to be bought with the blood and tears of hard thought and feverish activities of Rammohun and others, whose voices seemed to be embalmed in the vaults of that grand prayer-hall. Devendranath's sage and serious looks, his attractive personality, his aristocratic demeanour, his burning religious enthusiasm, his fair face with heavy lines on them, his flowing beard—all made him a highly impressive figure on the pedestal of the Samaj. That memorable evening, Devendranath irradiated his spiritual light on Vijaykrishna, and his inspiring speech on "Sinners and God's Forgiveness" and the canticle intoned by him, found a warm response in his heart and silently drew the young enthusiast to the arms of the Samajist. Soon after accepting the discipleship of Devendranath, he became a regular member of the Samaj and in no time turned out to be a great missionary ever vigilant in his solicitude and unwearied in his exertions for the advancement of this infant church.

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Though under Rammohun, Brahmoism was *Vedanta-pratipadya dharma,* and he himself a Sankarite Vedantist, the form of Brahmo worship, which he introduced, was essentially dualistic. Sister Nivedita, in *Notes of some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda,* thus writes about Rammohun: "It was here (Nainital) too that we heard a talk on Rammohun Ray, in which he (Vivekananda) pointed out three things as the dominant notes of this Teacher's message,—his acceptance of the Vedanta, his preaching of patriotism, and the love that embraced the Mussalman equally with the Hindu. In all these three things, he (Vivekananda) claimed himself to have taken the task that the breadth and foresight of Rammohun Ray had mapped out." In accordance with this, we have to say that as a passionate Unitarian Rammohun drew on the Adwaita Vedanta alone for his monotheistic faith. Rammohun was a revivalist, and his theism was nothing but the old theism of India rescucitated. But he sought to free the old theism of the *prevalent ideas of caste and image-worship,* which he was led to think as unscientific and irrational without any spiritual value. The Raja had the same attitude towards caste as Mrityunjayacharya had expressed in his book *Bajrasuchi.* Swami Dayanand Saraswati, whose illustrious name is so closely associated with Neo-Hinduism in India, so resented the image-worship of his father during *Sivaratri* that, in response to the call of his innermost being, he left home shortly after. The Rubicon was crossed, and he turned a Unitarian with an implacable hatred of idolatry. On one occasion, when young Devendranath invited Rammohun to the *Durgapuja* festival at his house, the latter thundered, "Invite me to an idolatrous ceremony! Me!" There was the ring of steel in 'Me'. So this theistic movement, although a revivalist movement, gave, in certain respects, a negative and antithetical turn to the older theism.

In the dim past, in days of yore, whose gloom tradition itself cannot penetrate, the Indian sages proclaimed, in a trumpet-voice, this truth—"Though variously called by sages, He is One (*Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*)." And this old theism of India, even if it recognized the plurality of gods and goddesses, could not be an advocate of idols as idols. If we care to know the rationale of the image-worship in the old theism of India, we find that the ideals, the metaphysical attributes of Godhead, are symbolically represented and reverently worshipped in the idols. The multiple gods and goddesses merge in the oneness and infinitude of the Supreme Person, the *Virat Purusha*. In image-worship, the Hindu worshippers do not attribute the excellent moral and spiritual qualities and the awe-inspiring divine powers to the natural or artificial material objects, but to the Supreme Spirit dwelling in, and represented by, them. Even sacrifices are allowed by the older theism. Jesus Christ never spoke of sacrifices as being distasteful to God the Father. The founder of Islamic theism sacrificed a number of camels in the name of Allah, when he conquered Mecca and made his triumphal entry into that capital city. Thus, we see that Rammohun imbibed the spirit of modernism in scorning the paraphernalia of ceremonials in Hinduism.

Adwaita Vedantism is the path of knowledge. St. Denis, the Areopagite, the author of *Treatise on Mystic Theology,* in his attempt to define God, collected on one page all the negatives he could contrive, and likewise our Sankara, in his quest of the Absolute Reality behind all phenomenal realities, armed himself with the weapon of *"Neti, Neti* (Not this, Not this)." Brahmoism, though drawing largely on Adwaita Vedanta, was *Jnana-misra Bhakti ;* for, at the first instance, it stands on dualistic faith. Then Rammohun accepted the spirit of the *Bhagabat Gita* as to social and domestic duties, in preference to the doctrine of Sankaracharya regarding monasticism. *Karma Yoga* or the Principle of Action is a necessary factor in *'Bhakti* in evolution'. *Bhakti* finds in *Karma* its visible symbol. It is sometimes urged that *Karma* is for those for whom *Bhakti* is impossible. But this is true neither scientifically nor from the *Shastric* standpoint. The Faculty Psychologists may have divided the different aspects of the mind into water-tight compartments, but Modern Psychology no longer believes in this compartmental division. Turning then to our *Shastric* evidence, we find that the notion of the three *Yogas* is analogous to the *Guna* concept. According to *Devi Bhagavata,* one of the most authoritative of the *Shakta Shastras,* a *Guna* in its evolutionary stage has to be conjoined with another in the form of male-female relation for productivity. *Sattva* is nowhere found operative alone, but there is joint action in some form or other. And if, according to *Devi Bhagavata,* a *guna* in its evolution becomes a female, we can, for all practical purposes, take a *Yoga* in evolution, specially *Bhakti* in evolution, for a female. *Bhakti,* the female organism, co-exists with *Karma,* which we may call the companion male. Wherever there is the truest *Karma Yoga, Jnana* is also allied to *Karma.* Apparently *Jnana* and *Bhakti* are believed to be antagonistic. While the *Jnanin* realizes himself to be the Self by winning back his old position by the complete mastery of the undisciplined forces set in motion by *Pravritti,* that grim monstress, standing athwart the path of the *Sadhaka's* progress and making him her slave, the *Bhakta* makes no attempt to get out of the hands of *Pravritti,* but directs all his passions towards God in such a way that even that enchantress, pouring out all her influences in the flood of *natura rerum,* becomes his helpmate like Ariadne leading Theseus by the hand through the labyrinthine mazes. The *Sankarites* have evidently misunderstood and misinterpreted their master's theory, when they have denied the reciprocity of *Karma* and *Jnana*. The teacher of the *Bhagavat Gita* has warned us times without number against a breach between the two. It has been argued by the *Sankarites* that their master must have held the incompatibility of *Karma* and *Jnana,* because according to him *Avidya* or Nescience is the source of all *Karmas,* while *Vidya* or the Light of Truth is the source of *Jnana*. *Avidya* belongs to the world of *Maya,* the "Valley of False Glimmer" ; it has a positive and negative aspect, it raises a wall between ourselves and the Supermind or Truth-consciousness and also plunges us in the Serbonian bog. It has no beginning like Pythagoras's Metempsychosis, of which Dr. Faustus spoke so pathetically in his dying speech. Sankar conceives *Avidya* as a form of energy constituting the seed of the material cosmos, and modern science also goes deeper from the gross atoms to electrons and ultimately reduces everything to energy as the origin of the Universe. Seeing like Abt Vogler "the finger of God, a flash of the will that can, existent behind all laws that made them," the *Jnanin* annihilates this seminal *Avidya, Maya* is hoisted with her own petard ; and now that the reservoir of the unconscious or subconscious is plumbed, the bucket is lowered, and turned up to the surface, she is the crystal of knowledge and, in that redoubtable sphere of the Beyond, everything is deeply moral, and there is nothing immoral or amoral. So the whole thing comes to this that the *Jnanin* performs *Karma* all right, but his *Karma* is coupled with, and purified by, *Jnana*, and there is no Œdipus-complex, no self-inflation, no injunctions, positive or negative. Hence it is that Rammohun could accept the teachings of the 'I' of the *Gita*, while basing his religion on Adwaita Vedanta. Under Maharshi Devendranath, there was discernible in Brahmoism a distinct element of *Bhakti*, and his conception of *Bhakti* was similar to that given in *Sandilya Sutra* 2 (*'sa paranurakti reesvare'*). As years passed, this *Bhakti* element deepened, the Maharshi never closed his eyes to the world full of wonder and beauty, his God was a Person, not a Spiritual King-Log, not extra-cosmic or supra-mundane but both transcendent and immanent, known and yet unknown, with attributes and also without attributes. Thus the spiritual culture of the Samaj contained within itself the very thing that Vijaykrishna sought ; *Jnana* and *Bhakti* stood shoulder to shoulder. Never were Martha and Mary in greater accord.

CHAPTER V

THE SPIRIT OF THE SAMAJ

Rammohun propounded the new religion—Brahmoism, when the first rays of Western civilization made an onslaught on the hoary majesty of India's age-long tradition, and a tremendous necessity was felt to inaugurate co-operation between the East and the West. The atmosphere of India has been thick with the ideals of religion for shining scores of centuries ; and in India religion is the one thing on which our vitality is concentrated ; it is the sum-total of life,—the line of the least resistance ; and if this religious life is not fostered, an atrophy overtakes the body of the whole country. And that is perhaps why Rammohun wanted to rejuvenate the national life of India through the establishment of a Unitarian Church, which would also bring about a spiritual union between the East and the West.

Looking around, Rammohun found absolute stagnation everywhere. Religion had degenerated into repeating by rote certain dead and lifeless formulæ under sinister priestly domination. The society broke up into a number of jarring units, and there was no bond of union among them ; and this was due to the odious caste system in its degenerate form, which was quite in opposition to the teachings of ancient Vedanta Philosophy, preaching the existence of God in Man. Rammohun was so much moved by the state of affairs around him that he considered it to be his great duty to raise his country from the depths of social, moral, and political degradation, and to secure for it a place in the Family of Nations by importing the rich and stimulating Western ideas, which were destined to take the place of the old and outworn practices and out-of-date theories, on which life in the Orient was then based. But the monotheistic doctrine which he preached was not at all new to India. So, Rammohun, though the inaugurator of this Unitarian movement, had no claim to originality. Nevertheless, the constitution of the Brahmo Samaj—the *Manga Carta Dei*—in 1828 created quite a stir in Bengal at that time and opened a new era in the religious history of the country.

Despite Rammohun's large borrowings from the Vedanta, his Unitarianism should not be identified with Hindu Monism. Nor should it be confused with Christian Unitarianism. Rammohun like a great seer adopted a policy of selection and rejection in his work of religious synthesis. "He culled the fine flowers of spiritual knowledge and intuition from the foliage of religion and composed them into a boquet which could be enjoyed by all alike." Brahmoism as founded by him was an eclectic religion, although he defended himself against any charge of eclecticism that might be levelled at him. We cannot correctly say that Rammohun founded his religion on the bed-rock of "Universalism", for he turned his face sharply against polytheism, which Keshav later on wanted to include in Brahmoism "while keeping the central basis of his theism intact". Nor did Rammohun reject only the debased form of polytheism prevalent among the Hindus (which he had to do as a Hindu Unitarian) but also the Christian Trinity—the conception of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, the "highest expression of polytheism in the Three in One". Rammohun preached the cult of the brotherhood of man, and his Unitarian association designated as the Brahmo Samaj, was open to all without distinction of caste and creed. In the trust deed, Rammohun wrote that the Brahmo Samaj, as its name implies, was intended "for the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable, and Immutable Being, Who is the Author and Preserver of the universe, but not under or by any other name, designation, or title, peculiarly used for, and applied to, any particular Being or Beings, by any man, or set of men, whatsoever". In the Samaj, no religion "shall be reviled or contemptuously spoken of or alluded to". Rammohun conceived God as the Primordial Energy bringing cosmos out of chaos, from Whom all beings evolve and in Whom all beings die, "the Author and Preserver of the Universe", the Impersonal God beyond the senses and without attributes ; and the object of this 'Universal' Religion shall be the promotion of "charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue and the strengthening of the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds".

What Rammohun's personal faith was it is difficult to say correctly. He was neither a Hindu, nor a Mussalman, nor a Christian, but all in one ; for, perhaps with his power of original synthetic analysis, with his penetrating eye "made quiet by the power of harmony and seeing into the life of things", he saw the many in the One and the One in the many. The Maulavis with whom he talked with transparent clearness and singular candour, as if giving them the key to his own heart, having profound respect for Sufism, claimed him to be a *Zabardust Maulavi*. The veteran Pandits of India who had drunk deep at the founts of ancient Vedanta philosophy, found in him a great Hindu. The Christians saw in him a champion of their faith. But the essence of Rammohun's faith was liberalism, and he was bound neither to orthodox Christianity, nor to orthodox Hinduism, nor to orthodox Sufism. His religion was Hinduism in its purest and unadulterated form *minus* the conception of incarnations ; Christianity (the ethical system of which religion was emphasised by him) *minus* the conception of the Divinity of Christ ; Sufism, freed of its orthodoxy, if any. His attempt at establishing a spiritual link, a connected life-current between the East and the West, shows clearly that there was nothing sacerdotal or parochial in his outlook, that, though an intense patriot ever fighting for Indian interests in political life, he never allowed his sense of patriotism to degenerate into race-prejudice, and with him nationalism was never inconsistent with internationalism. When he heard that any nation had attained freedom, he was overjoyed. When Spain secured a constitutional form of government, he gave a dinner at the Townhall in honour of the event, and on his way to England, he touched the French flag of liberty in support of the Revolution in France against absolutism, which became an old dilapidated thing.

A prince of the Arabian Nights in his mode of living. he was, nevertheless, an inexhaustible fund of energy and activity, and he wore himself out in the service of his country, not only as a great religious reformer but also as a social and political leader. In the Presidential Address to the Calcutta Theistic Conference of 1906, Mr. R. Venkataratnam said,—Rammohun was "the inspired engineer in the world of faith that cut the channel of communication, the spiritual Suez, between sea and sea land-locked in the rigid sectarianism of exclusive revelation, and set their separate surges of national life into one mighty world-current of universal humanity''. On September 27, 1833, he died of brain fever at Bristol —''the Queen of the Sea'' ; and his tomb bears the epitaph: ''A conscientious and steadfast believer in the unity of Godhead: he consecrated his whole life with entire devotion to the worship of the Divine Spirit alone.''

When Rammohun sailed for England to fight for the extension of Indian liberties, a very mediocre man, Ramchandra Vidyavagish was left in charge of the prayer-hall. Ramchandra Vidyavagish, it has been said, was not a thorough Brahmo in that he believed in the incarnation of God. Belief in the *Avatarhood* of God is a negation of the essential Brahmo creed. The interregnum of Ramchandra Vidyavagish is of little significance in the history of the Brahmo Samaj.

With the stepping in of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, began the heyday of the Brahmo Samaj. While Rammohun was trying his best to unite the national waves of the East and the West into a vast and blessed ocean of rich thought and culture, and this union was sought to be effected in and through the Brahmo Samaj with its rationalistic and independent theism, Devendranath was an intuitional dualistic thinker and, imbued with the Indian spirit, wanted to develop the Samaj by swimming with the current of the Indian tradition. Devendranath's inspiration came through the channel of the Upanishads, not however as they are, but subjected to a free interpretation. By interpreting the Upanishads in the manner he thought best, he tried to organize the Samaj on purely Indian foundations. In his book *Brahmo Dharma* (1848), he culled the choicest gems of Indian religious thought and culture from the Upanishads, which he studied so very carefully at Benares. After the return of the four

Pandits from Benares, the fallibility of the Upanishads was evident to him. Soon after this negative discovery, he published his selections from the Upanishads and the Smritis. According to Devendranath, God was not merely "the Author and Preserver of the universe", but certain attributes, *e.g.* Truth, Infinite Wisdom, Immeasurable kindness, Infinite Beatific Bliss were ascribed to Godhead by him. To Devendranath, Intuition or *Atmapratyaya* was equivalent to *Brahmapratyaya*. Through the mouth of the Spirit in *Manfred*, Byron also tells us that divine knowledge is the very essence of our being:—

Manfred— Oblivion, Self-oblivion—
Can ye not wring out from
the hidden realms
Ye offer so profusely what I ask?
Spirit— It is not in our essence,
in our skill.
But thou may'st die.
Manfred— Will death bestow it on me?
Spirit— We are immortal, do not forget:
We are eternal, and to us the past
Is, as the future, present.
Art thou answered?

During the pontificate of Devendranath, Brahmoism also received a fresh draught of Islamic influence, for the Tagore family had long served the Mussalmans as Pirilis or Chief Ministers. And it is not idle to conjecture that their uncompromising abhorrence of idolatry was, in no small degree, due to this fact. As Manjulal Dave in *The Poetry of Rabindranath Tagore* points out, the Tagores had long been unfavourably looked upon by society because of their relations with the Mussalmans. Islamic contact had perhaps so much impregnated the Tagore family with the monotheistic faith that they inscribed on the door of Santiniketan: "In this place no image is to be adored . . . . . And no man's faith is to be despised." On the death of Prince Dwarakanath in 1846, Devendranath courted great public censure by not performing the funeral rites, because these rites would involve idolatry whose enemy he was.

In his autobiography, which is a fine sincere record of the pilgrimage of his soul, he describes how his early life did not bear the promise of the future. In his early youth, he was caught in the trap of the world, but there were certain accidental happenings which turned the course of his life altogether and made him follow the Spirit of the Living God from the lap of pleasures to the solitudes of the Himalayas. There was a sudden death in his family which gave him a shock, and such a shock was needed to rouse the pleasure-loving Devendranath to the hard facts of life. One beautiful night, when Nature was bathing herself in the flood of moon-light, he suddenly heard somebody chanting the name of Hari to a dying woman on the banks of the Ganges, with one-half of her body immersed in the holy waters. Devendranath awakened to the truth that death is an intruder into the world of pleasures, and nobody can avert it and, if God be achieved, all our fears and anxieties terminate for us, and the race after the golden fleece and pleasures is a mad race. On another occasion, a torn page of the Upanishads was blown by a puff of wind to his feet, on which he found written the inspiring words:—Renounce all, seek Him. At another time, he was journeying by a boat. Suddenly there arose a storm, and the waves of the river were showing their white savage teeth to swallow him up. Devendranath's mind was loaded with anxiety. But the boatman did never lose heart. His tranquillity was a direct contrast to Devendranath's careworn, preoccupied spirit. His words "Be not afraid! Forward" seemed to Devendranath a heavenly injunction, and there came the great renunciation. During his periodic meditation in the Himalayan hermitages, out of the depths of his subconscious life, there arose great things which, when he returned to human society, made him the worshipped of all. People aureoled him with the name of saint. And in 1842 he joined the Samaj and stood at its helm for many shining years till death.

Christian influences entered into the very heart of the Samaj even during the administration of Devendranath through the mediation of the young zealot, Keshav Sen. As Keshav's mental make-up was different from Devendranath's, the ingress of spiritual dynamism in him led him to introduce certain new things into the Samaj. There reigned a calm over the silent deeps of Devendranath's devotion, but there was an upward surge of animated feeling in Keshav. Christianity lay very near to the heart of Keshav, so that on his death in 1884, *The Indian Christian Herald* wrote on him:—"The Christian Church mourns the death of its greatest ally. The Christians looked upon him as God's messenger, sent to awake India to the spirit of Christ." The Indians had long looked askance at the Christians, and the Christian paper, therefore, congratulated Keshav on his having attempted to break down the high rock of opposition to Christ in this country. Keshav proclaimed himself as "Jesudas", but Keshav's championship of Christianity and his attempt to give it a footing in the Samaj, were not liked by his countrymen, and the non-Christian Brahmos may be caught in the act of distorting facts to throw a veil over Keshav's proclamation of himself as a follower of Christ in such lectures as "India asks, Who is Christ?", "Am I an Inspired Prophet?" "What was it that made me so singular in the early years of my life? Providence brought me into the presence of three very singular persons in those days. They were among my soul's earliest acquaintances. I met three stately figures, heavenly, majestic, and full of divine radiance . . . . . John the Baptist was seen going about in the wilderness of India, saying, 'Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' . . . . . I fell down at the feet of John the Baptist . . . . . He passed away, and then came another prophet far greater than he, the prophet of Nazareth. . . . . 'Take no thought for the morrow.' These words of Jesus found a lasting lodgment in my heart. Hardly had Jesus finished His words, when came another prophet, and that was the travelled ambassador of Christ, the strong, heroic and valiant Apostle Paul. . . . . . And his words came upon me like a burning fire at a most critical period of my life." In that lecture 'Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia', which created a regular sensation and served as a brilliant reply to his critic Moncrief, Keshav spoke with remarkable force and robust self-confidence, perhaps fired by Prof. Seely's *Ecce Homo*:—"I have my own ideas about Christ, but I am not bound to give them out in due form, until altered circumstances of the country gradually develop them out of my mind. Jesus is identical with self-sacrifice, and as He lived and preached in the fulness of time, so must He be in turn preached in the fulness of time . . . . . I am therefore patiently waiting that I may grow with age and the nation and the spirit of Christ's sacrifice may grow therewith. . . . . . Blessed Jesus, immortal child of God! For the world he lived and died. May the world appreciate him and follow his precepts.''

But had Keshav been merely an inspired follower of Christ, seeking to graft certain elements of Christianity to the parent tree of the Brahmo Samaj, he would not have been so great a puzzle to us like the Prince of Denmark—''the sphinx of modern literature''—whose part he once took at a dramatic representation in his college. Keshav was a commingle of incompatibles, of contrarieties. In him we find both Theocentricism and Anthropocentricism, to use the terms employed by Henri Bremond, the man who analysed Western mysticism. Born of a Vaisnavilte family, Keshav had a dash of mysticism in his nature, and through him Vaisnavism also influenced Brahmoism. Moreover, Keshav was a great social reformer, and to him social reform should proceed *pari passu* with religious reform. But Devendranath had no idea of linking up social reform with religious reform and mostly regarded the former to be independent of the latter. Moreover, Keshav as a go-ahead young man, full of fire and intense radicalism, provoked schisms which created a lot of stir and activity and party-opposition within the Samaj. It is these that make Keshav a complex personality, and it is really difficult to analyse the strands in the texture of his mind.

The Brahmo Samaj under Keshav had its complexion greatly changed, and though it was the spirit of Rammohun that was active, the spiritual army of the Samaj marched by this time far away from the position at which Rammohun had left it. The development of the Samaj only proved that it was a living organism. Keshav revived the spirit of Rammohun in making religion the handmaid of moral and social service. Religion, therefore, did not *prima facie* mean other-worldliness with him, but a sort of copula linking up God with humanity. Even more than all these services was Keshav's gradual mistrust of reasoning in religious matters. Rammohun was a rationalist, a moralist. Reason was Rammohun's chief dower, and he looked with disdain upon the emotional excesses, to which the Vaisnavites are liable. Of course, his Unitarian doctrine, his plumbing the depths of religious experience, could not be possible without a strain of mysticism in his nature. In Devendranath's case, there was discernible the growing religious inspiration, which, though backed by reason, was not reason itself. But under Keshav, the meetings of the Samaj were scenes of great emotional outburst. Alongside of the influence of Christianity, the Vaishnavite influence worked. And Keshav was not only a follower of Christ, but was also a follower of Chaitanya. He accepted the Divinity of Christ, when he drew up *The New Dispensation* and said, "Christ was God". But however much Keshav might have professed Christ, he was not a Christian (for he said, "Christ is not Christianity"), but "stood at the threshold of an independent career with the shadow of Jesus on the one hand and the shadow of Chaitanya on the other". In his efforts to give emotion a proper place in the Samaj prayer, Keshav had a great co-adjutor whose invaluable work and yeoman's service went a great way towards making the Brahmo Samaj a unique thing in the religious history of the world and without whom it is doubtful whether Keshav could have done what he did. This co-adjutor was the great Vijaykrishna.

The tree in the natural kingdom lives on the air inhaled by the leaves and the sap supplied by the soil and artificial watering. So the tree of religion requires for its nourishment and growth fresh draughts, and then it is decked with fine foliage and rich fruitage and gives shelter to many under its overhanging boughs. This is truer of Brahmoism than of any other religion, for eclecticism is its soul. Hinduism lent certain things to Buddhism ; and Buddhism and Jainism gave some elements to each other. Hinduism, the parent-stock, had to be revived and rehabilitated by Sankaracharya to fight against the theory of the void and the *Mahayana* School of Buddhism, and in Neo-Hinduism, there was a substratum of Buddhism. But these religions are not eclectic in the sense Brahmoism was, and hence it had to borrow from the theistic orthodoxies for its growth and sustenance. In introducing some semblance of *Bhakti* emotionalism into Brahmoism, Vijaykrishna gave it a new lease of life. Reason or intellectualism does not feed the founts of religion, and *Bhakti* is the heart of all religions. Not only in religion, but also in literature, in oratory, emotion is a necessary concomitant of reason. The eighteenth century in English literature was not a creative age because of its rationalistic background ; there was the drying up of the lyrical impulse, and the magic wand of Prospero was buried fifty fathoms deep. Nature became a dull mechanical clock-work, a savage and unkempt condition which was reformed into order by the corrective efforts of civilized man. The Victorian Age was a great age, because in it there was a synthesis. Likewise, in order that a great religion may thrive and appeal to all minds, emotionalism and rationalism should be balanced in it.

Although Keshav was nurtured in the cradle of a Vaishnavite family and he wanted to unite Christ to

Chaitanya, the Vaishnavite form of emotionalism could never have so pronounced an effect upon the Samaj through him alone. Keshav said: "The Lord Jesus is my will, Socrates my head, Chaitanya my heart, the Hindu *Rishi* my soul, and the philanthropic Howard my right hand." Regarding Chaitanya as a part of his body or mind was not enough. The shadow of Chaitanya indeed fell on his way, but He was a dim visitant, and it is certain that he could not have canalised the *Bhakti* cult of Bengal into the broad stream of Brahmoism, had he not had Vijaykrishna as his co-adjutor and best help-meet. It was also not Keshav, who realized the necessity of *Bhakti* for the first time among the Samajists. Rammohun felt the need of *Bhakti,* but thought that Sufism would take its place. In an article on Rammohun by Dhirendranath Chowdhury in the *Modern Review,* October, 1928, we have:—"Rammohun was pre-eminently a *Sadhaka* . . . . . . Though a Vedantist in every pulse of his being, he did not fail to perceive that the *Upanishads* were not sufficient to satisfy the *Bhakti* hankerings of the soul, nor was he able to side with the *Bhakti* cult of Bengal . . . . But he hoped that the needs of the *Bhaktas* would be met by the Sufis . . . . ." It is a matter of fact and experience that the mind cannot long bear the yoke of reason, and Vijaykrishna became the hero of the hour, because he gave the Samaj what it needed so much at that time.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRUTH-INTOXICATED YOUTH

"He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." This precept of renunciation as the only way to perfection, to true religion, found in Vijaykrishna its most ardent follower. Nothing was sweeter to Vijay than to die for the sake of religion. We shall presently see that he braved the tremendous fury of the elements, he waded his way through the deep water in the streets of Calcutta, while a violent tempest was raging, in his enthusiasm for religious duty. He saw the work of God the Destroyer, with as much delight, as he saw the work of God the Preserver and feared not to die in the service of Him, Who had given him life and could take it when He pleased.

This love of truth prompted him to forsake the profession of his forefathers, and he made up his mind to study the Medical Science. So he went to Santipur to obtain his mother's permission. His mother, born and bred up in the atmosphere of Vaishnavic thoughts and ideas, wondered how her son, being a member of the orthodox Goswami family of Santipur, could ever conceive the idea of adopting such a filthy course in life for his subsistence. The idea was foreign to her. But she gave way to the importunities of Vijaykrishna and reluctantly gave her assent. During his stay there, one day he was speaking to the people round him about the universal brotherhood of man, God being our common Father. A boy of eleven years, who was then standing by, said to him, "I see that as an upholder of the universal religion, you don't believe in caste ; why then do you wear the holy thread? Are you not contradicting yourself?'' This was a sort of revelation to Vijaykrishna, and he tore off the thread then and there. But to save the frantic mother, who, at the news, proceeded to hang herself to death, he resumed the holy thread. The mother was so thoroughly wedded to the tradition of the Goswamis that she could not brook anything that was in the least antagonistic to the repute of the purest and the most immaculate family of Adwaita. Vijaykrishna resumed the thread, but the peace of his mind was gone. The mother could not feel his pulse.

Soon after his return to Calcutta, he became a student of the Medical College and in a short time proved to be the foremost student there. It was at this time that he was formally initiated by Maharshi Devendranath into Brahmoism. He now came in closer contact with the Brahmo Samaj. Not content with the weekly prayers for a couple of hours in the Samaj, Vijaykrishna made arrangements for daily prayers in some solitary nook of his abode. But the thought that he was wearing the thread, although he was a Brahmo, was eating into the vitals of his heart, just as the canker eats into the young blossoms of spring. Devendranath's view on this point was not in unison with his, yet he did not waver ; he was firm and resolute in his own view. Night and day his mind was preyed upon by terrible imaginings. It was an hour of utter spiritual tumult. Vijaykrishna now attended the 'Hita-Sancharini Sabha', an association formed about this time by some East Bengal students of the Medical College with the object of self-culture, based on religion and truth. Vijaykrishna listened to the discussion of the meeting, and this made his 'assurance doubly sure'. The holy thread became unbearable to him. He again renounced the thread and this time, for good. Again he stirred a hornet's nest about his ears. Darts of stern opposition and crying scandal were cast upon him by his relatives and the orthodox Hindus. Vijaykrishna was far above all this. He enjoyed a satisfaction which was foreign to the ordinary men of the world.

At this time, Vijaykrishna came into the field of a body of religious workers known as the 'Sangat-Sabha'. It was established by Keshav at his own house in 1860. He, with some young Brahmo friends of his at his back, formed a strong band of active and sincere workers ; several other great men came and joined hands with them. To find a suitable field for carrying their radical schemes into execution, they, with the help of Devendranath, organised the Sangat. It was so christened by the Maharshi after the name of a similar body of Sikh aspirants in the Punjab. On the occasion of the first anniversary of the Sangat, Vijaykrishna was invited and he attended the ceremony. There he came across a pamphlet *Brahmo Dharmer Anusthan,* published by the Sangat. It supported the renunciation of the holy thread. This attracted him, and hoping that the Sangat would be favourable to the growth of his religious sentiments, he shortly became a member of this body. It proved to be of much help to him. The Sangat afforded him ample scope and facility to become familiar with his Brahmo brethren. It was at the Sangat that Vijaykrishna became acquainted with Keshav and gradually came to realize his merit. They both had the same purpose in life, and before long they were united in bonds of everlasting friendship. The Sangat was as dear to him as the Brahmo Samaj.

Once after the renunciation of his holy thread, Vijaykrishna went to Santipur. His mother looked upon the rejection of his thread as a disgrace to the high family of Adwaita and was deeply mortified at heart. She insisted on his resuming the thread and began to cry in a frantic manner, lying at his feet. The sight overwelmed Vijaykrishna. His mind hovered between two alternatives; now he felt inclined to obey his mother and now he was drawn to his own conviction. These conflicting thoughts puzzled him so much that he fainted. After he had come round, he explained himself and told her that he would die, if he would deviate an inch from what he knew to be truth. For, God is Truth and Truth is God. He visualized Jacob's ladder rising from the subconscious depth of the ego to the peaks crowned by the stars. The mother at once understood him and blessed him from the fulness of her heart. But the orthodox Hindus of Santipur could not tolerate this act of Vijaykrishna. They were bent on making an example of him. When he was out, they reviled him, threw dust on him, called him mad, spat on him, and even ruthlessly pelted him with stones or brickbats, which sometimes grazed his body and sometimes wounded his beautiful person. Vijaykrishna endured all this with calmness. He said that truth was on his side. He no longer felt the qualms of his conscience which had been more painful to him. At their instigation Vijaykrishna's own men closed their doors upon him ; yet the Hindus of Santipur were not satisfied. They began to torment him with inhuman and barbarous ferocity. He was seized upon, his body was besmeared with treacle, and a number of wasps were set on his limbs to sting him. One day while attending a *sankirtan,* he now and then laughed or cried in ecstasy. This was taken amiss by some Goswamis, and he was removed from the place, and a villain, doubtful of his conduct, went so far as to press on his body iron tongs burnt red-hot, but not a cry of groan ever escaped his lips. At another time, some wicked people strung together a number of old shoes in the form of a garland and attempted to throw it round his neck, while Vijaykrishna was in a trance during a *samkirtan* in the house of a Goswami. But instead of falling on the neck of Vijaykrishna, it fell on the neck of one of the Goswamis of the house.

The life of great teachers is always a life of martyrdom. Socrates was made to drink poison. Galileo was thrown into prison. St. Stephen was stoned to death and his breast was scored with scars. Bruno was burnt alive. Jesus Christ was crucified. But God armed them all with a weapon to shield themselves, and they fought under His ægis. They are dead, but the Truth has triumphed. Vijaykrishna had not the least thought of retaliation, the outcome of bad blood, but always had meek forbearance, Christ-like and Promethean in its grandeur.

> . . . . Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
> Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
> Too much avenged by those who err.

The orthodox Hindus interpreted Vijaykrishna's action as an orgy of mental intoxication, whose remedy is the syrup of poppy. Whatever they did or said was meant to afflict him. But nothing could turn him round. The lamp of his faith burned as unflickering as ever. His convictions were as robust and firm as the Rock of Gibralter. The elderly people advised him to leave Santipur. He told them that, if staying there, he could, through their grace, set up a Brahmo Samaj by way of doing some good to Santipur, he would consider himself fortunate. Soon this thought was uppermost in his mind, and he set about it in right earnest. The simple truths of Brahmoism appealed to some young men of the place, and they joined him. In a short time, Vijaykrishna was able to establish a Brahmo Samaj at Santipur. He thus carried into effect the object he had in view. All his friends and relatives except Kishori Lal Maitra, his sister's husband, deserted him. He sympathised with him sincerely, but he was so cut by people around him that his position in the orthodox Hindu society could not be resoldered, and he had actually to shift his abode from the peaceful recesses of Santipur to the noisy and dusty highways of Calcutta.

Though branded and ostracised by his relatives and even by his own brother Braja Gopal, Vijaykrishna did not lose heart. He looked up to God for support, and God beckoned him beyond the walls of the world to a high vantage ground where he knew God alone, whence he saw God the Beloved in all His creation and realized that without this all-animating vitality, men on earth are but painted figures on the screen, that it is due to God's will that the cycle of changes is going on in the phenomenal universe,—'the vapours weep their burthen to the ground, man comes and tills the field and lies beneath, and after many a summer dies the swan'. He effaced his self and made it sink in the ocean of the spirit.

On his return to Calcutta, Vijaykrishna came to know at the Sangat that many persons in the district of Jessore were eager to embrace the new faith, but there was no suitable missionary at that time in the Brahmo Samaj. Vijaykrishna gladly offered his services. This was disliked by his friends ; they apprehended that his prospect would be marred, if he would take up the missionary work instead of going in for the final medical examination at hand. Vijaykrishna took 'no thought for the morrow' and counting on the benign dispensation of Providence, embarked on a new career. He successfully passed the necessary examination and went through the preliminary training with credit. In 1864, he was appointed a missionary and soon after, sent to the village of Baganchara in Jessore. His missionary work was very satisfactory. It was the labour of his love. He initiated twenty-three families into Brahmoism in course of nine days and worked hard for the welfare of the village. Then he went to Pabna, Kumarkhali, and other places and returned to Calcutta.

As the critic of tradition Vijaykrishna saw that most men are slow to realize that the love of truth is an important element in the love of God. Samuel Butler said that "the philosopher must be one who has left all, even Christ Himself for Christ's sake." The phrase "giving up Christ Himself for Christ's sake" means giving up Christ in name and form, if necessary, for the better appropriation and inspiration of His spirit through truth. The glittering apex of the orthodox Hindu society supported by the principle of caste, was rickety in the extreme. And the great Samajists were sworn enemies of caste ; yet Rammohun died at Bristol with the sacrificial thread on his person, and Devendranath also did not abjure the sacrificial thread, till he read *Brahma Dharmer Anusthan,* the pamphlet of the Sangat. So long the daily prayer in the prayer-hall had been in charge of the Brahmins. It was his love for Keshav that induced the venerable patriarch of the Samaj to install him as minister, although Keshav was Vaidya by caste. It was

Vijaykrishna, who began the thread-controversy and it was he who set the ball a-rolling. In fact, the renunciation of the holy thread for truth's sake was an august event. It helped the Brahmos to imbibe the true spirit of Brahmoism, and it was regarded by Vijaykrishna in the light of a direction of God, the voice of the Soul, the Kingdom of God within him. Hence he was so very confident, so sure of himself, when he fought with concentrated strength against the insignia of idolatry in the Samaj. If it was inconsistent with the Brahmo creed to wear the holy thread, was it not wrong to allow the thread-bearing Brahmos to act as *Upacharyas* in the Brahmo Samaj? Vijaykrishna saw through the question and stood up against the insincerity. He moved Keshav to fight with the old leader to dismiss the thread-bearing ministers of the Samaj and replace them by two thread-less Brahmos. At first, Maharshi Devendranath did not join hands with Keshav, in spite of their unexampled friendship, for fear of schisms and also because he imbibed a spirit of wholesome conservatism. But afterthought as well as affection for Keshav got the better of him, and he yielded, he agreed to make the necessary change. As the existing ministers would rather leave their office than part with their holy thread, it became incumbent on Keshav to select two thread-less Brahmos competent to hold the post. His choice fell upon one Brahmo, Annada Charan. As for the other, he requested Vijaykrishna to accept the post of *Upacharya*, as there was no truer Brahmo deserving of the position than he. Vijaykrishna was ever the simplest of men, but, being afraid lest this should give rise to egoism which was a thing alien to him, he at first refused the offer but at the repeated entreaties of Keshav, he afterwards agreed. Thus Vijaykrishna and

Annada Charan Chattopadhyaya were appointed as *Upacharyas* of the Brahmo Samaj. This set up a feeling of discord between the old and the new Brahmos. Keshav and his party wanted to abolish the caste system, but the older people were not in favour of this idea ; it jarred against their nerves.

Vijaykrishna as *Upacharya* could move the hearts of his audience. His prayers and sermons inspired the hearers with devout feelings during his services. What he said was always heart-felt, never lip-born. He was ever true to himself. There was nothing ostentatious in him. He was not the man to charm his audience by eloquent speeches, if the eloquence were not the outcome of his own actual feeling. He never dealt in plated wares which glitter for the time being but do not stand the wear and tear of life. "Simple truth was his utmost skill." The current of his thought flowed towards just and rightful cause. He could not connive at what he believed to be wrong. One day Devendranath sent him some presents with a letter, asking him to act as *Upacharya* at his house that evening on the occasion of the name-giving ceremony of his grandson. He could not bring himself to accept the presents. He was afraid lest he should set a bad example in the Samaj. He followed the dictates of his conscience without any regard to the opinion of others. It occurred to him about this time that, to break down the chain of the caste-distinction, not only the renunciation of the holy thread but also inter-marriage, was needful. He, forthwith, held a consultation with Keshav. The joint efforts of these two enthusiasts soon proved successful, and there took place two cases of inter-marriage in the Brahmo circle. The old Brahmos deeply resented this course of action.

For a time Devendranath, even in the teeth of opposition from certain quarters, supported his young friend Keshav, but he soon returned to his own position made secure by picket posts. Devendranath worked upon the principles that had animated Edmund Burke in the domain of politics. Like Burke he knew that certain healthy changes are to be made from time to time, but he did never precipitate matters by overthrowing the outposts of old time-hallowed social institutions. Soon his orthodox fears were roused.

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While Vijaykrishna was an *Upacharya* in the Brahmo Samaj (October 1864), there was one evening a violent cyclone. The wind was high, and the whole of Calcutta with its spires and steeples and myriad houses was shaken. There were terrible downpours, and the broad long-stretching streets of Calcutta were turned into veritable rivers. Trees were uprooted, houses collapsed, and evreywhere there arose a hue and cry. A few terrible hours passed. Vijaykrishna suddenly remembered that it was the prayer-day of the Samaj. Go he must. The wind and waves were no hindrances to him. This spiritual passion, in the words of Schopenhauer, is as strong and consuming as any other passion and works its way like a stream without check or pilot. Within its victim it rages furious and raving like a wolf at prey. It drove Vijaykrishna mad. He must respond to the call of Duty—Duty, the Voice of God. Listless of the fury of the elements, he stirred out of home. The entreaties of his friends and relatives fell on deaf ears. It only symbolised his spiritual voyage to the House of God. With cloth torn and tattered, wet from head to foot, with eyes flushed, breast reddened by the afflux of blood, he reached the prayer-hall. Not a soul was there. For, the active apparition of God that had possessed him, could not fish out another from the ocean of men. Fortunately, he knew how to swim. Otherwise, the high level of water in some parts of the streets, would have swallowed him up. But he would not have cared, if he had died.

Alone he said his prayers. The big prayer-hall that had already succumbed to the storm, now threatened to bury alive its only inmate. On his way back, he met Keshav Chandra proceeding in a palanquin, borne by four men on their shoulders. Vijaykrishna's strictest adherence to religious duty in the teeth of all obstacles and in scorn of them, thrilled Keshav, and his heart overflowed in thanksgiving to him. Vijaykrishna again went to the prayer-hall accompanied by Keshav, and they said their prayers together. Devendranath did not come out, and in reply to Vijaykrishna's letter sent to him through a servant, he asked his beloved Vijaykrishna to realize, in those convulsions of Nature, the game of Art and *Shakti*, played by the cruel and yet brotherly hand of God. The devotee enjoys and appreciates with equal pleasure the work of God in His various attitudinal aspects ; to him the flashes of lightning are the luminous face of God peeping through the clouds and in the process making mysterious patterns that no artist's hand can paint. The wind is the breath of the angry and abysmal God, the peals of thunder are the roar of the legion of God swooping upon sinners and transgressors. And yet, all this is but a phase of the passion for sport that has seized the Great Comedian.

After the Samaj building was destroyed in certain parts by the cyclone, the meetings of the Samaj were temporarily held at Devendranath's own house. He now reverted to his old orthodox position and re-instated the two former thread-bearing ministers in their places. On the first day of the meeting, a little while before the appointed time, Keshav's party, to their surprise, found them re-installed on the pulpit. With his powerful arms outstretched, Vijaykrishna called out his party in a voice that was not in the least tremulous, but indicated a fearless spirit that has truth for its watch-word and that alone is capable of causing a flutter in the dovecots of convention. Vijaykrishna feared not to stand alone, if necessary ; he did not hesitate to lay the axe to the root of the tree, for he knew that "it cumbereth the ground" in its present state and that it must rise anew. The society, like Israel, requires the Law, if it has to understand the Gospel. Nevertheless, even in the face of Authority and Law, St. Paul says: "Wherever the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Our land has had enough of cringing petition and inane passion, causing easy tears of sentimentality to flow: what it requires is a pure self-giving for the cause of the highest, and unless there is this deep acceptance of life and death, this sporting spirit, the quality of the truest man, we are exiles from the Kingdom of the Spirit. Vijaykrishna had the lamp of the Vestal Virgins to guide his steps, wherever he sojourned. In his speeches or in his writings, Vijaykrishna was neither a hot gospeller nor a dilettante. His speeches were the outpourings of a simple soul, and "one simple soul makes more converts than many jesters."

The upshot of all this was the bifurcation of the Brahmo Samaj into the Adi Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj of India. The old Brahmo Samaj was dear to him only in so far as it gave his heart the relief it needed at a dreary hour by proving the efficacy of prayers. So far so good. If a Claudius prays, even a just avenger like Hamlet forbears to touch him. It was not, however, the teaching of a new principle but the reawakening of the same devout feeling that was Vijaykrishna's very soul. Prayers wash away the impurities of the soul, as a shower of rain washes clean the face of the earth. The Adi Samaj gave him nothing more. Rather it was discovered to be encumbered by certain hard customs and prejudices, which were out of court in Brahmoism. As the New Messiah of Bengal, Vijaykrishna might be said to have spoken of the purblind idolators of customs in orthodox Bengal what Christ said of Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem which killest the prophets and stonest that are sent unto thee ; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!"

The Sangat gave Keshav ample opportunity to develop his doctrinal theories and to expand the programme of social, domestic, and spiritual reform which he had mapped out at the very start of his unique career. The sacrificial fire, first lit by Keshav's resignation of his post in the Bank of Bengal and fed by similar sacrifices of its great apostolic worker, Vijaykrishna, aureoled the Sangat with a noble example, which became a social power and which could hardly be set by any member of the Adi Samaj save and except the great Devendranath. In the Sangat, Vijaykrishna was the gaze of all and the glowing focus of warm praise. Even while in the old Samaj, Vijaykrishna made his influence felt, but it was after the separation of Keshav's party from it that he appeared in full beauty as the portrait of the Spirit. Though a broad-minded liberal, voyaging to the uttermost Beyond, his was not negative revolutionism. Under the leadership of

Vijaykrishna and Keshab, there progressed this spiritual army annexing new lands and carrying the banner of Brahmoism far and wide, and the burning breath of their religious zeal blew over the province with the violence of the monsoon.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONSTRUCTIVE REVOLUTIONARY

We have seen that after giving up his Vedantic studies, Vijaykrishna got himself admitted to the Medical College, Calcutta. As he read in the Bengali section of that College, he did not see why Religion should regard Science as its traditional enemy. The study of science in those days might have troubled the optimistic surface-theism of many of his friends, but working through pure reason, he soon concluded that God is also the 'Yes' of the new world. He stood at a position at which Science meets Religion half-way. To a world, gradually becoming more and more charged with scientific thought, and more particularly to that great city where the Eastern and Western wares lay jumbled together, this truth-intoxicated youth, therefore, came as an embodiment of creative revolutionism. *'Veni creator spiritus.'* He thought that there was absolutely no reason why the narrow devotee should timidly close the shutters of the cell. For himself, he would tear off the swaddling clothes, scrape the blinkers of prejudice from the soul, and be drawn to rather than be wrapped by, the new influences at work. Even if the other *Sadhakas* would fight shy, our beautiful ephebe could not. Said he, let a dense atheist, not to be fooled into religion, read Anatomy and he will believe. He will be carried beyond the backwashes and imperfections of the mere intellect. Vijaykrishna treated the doubters with laughing good sense, for, he knew that ultimately they would reach a point at which their intuitional theistic belief would surge in their consciousness, and then they would be able to make the two halves of their soul speak independently to each other.

Thus wrote the Master in his little book *Dharma-Siksha* composed about this time:—

"Suppose you have entered a forest. You find a few stones scattered about. You naturally think that these stones are lying there for ever. But if you find a watch or a piece of cloth, you think that it must have been left behind by somebody and must be the handiwork of somebody, otherwise its existence is inexplicable. Such a thing bespeaks artistic skill. Likewise, everywhere in this vast universe, there is wonderful mechanism. It has not grown of itself. Unless there is an intelligent Being, how can this wonderful machinery be possible? Do you think that the parts of the watch have adjusted themselves into that form, of their free will, and without interference from anywhere? That is not true. There is some informing power which is responsible for the construction of this watch. For matter cannot think ; it is insensate. Only one that has thinking power can think and actualize. The planning of things in this limitless universe is a thousand times more amazing than the mere manufacture of a clock. Behold the universe! How great the stars are! As you think of them you stand in mute astonishment. You will not have to go far. Take your body and examine it but once. How wonderfully it is constituted! . . . . . . He who has thought out these splendid ingenuities, is God—the Creator of this moving universe."

In describing how the embryo develops in the womb of the mother, Vijaykrishna said that Nature as mechanic could never have brought this to pass. Science and

Religion, Reason and Faith, had long failed to see eye to eye with each other, but Vijaykrishna put his finger on a compromise. This compromise is not a sop to human weakness but the glowing nucleus of religious thought in a world, mellow with age ; for, if Religion is love of truth, and Science is the search for truth, the one cannot be in disharmony with the other. God is revealed in every branch of science—in Biology, in Physiology, in Cosmology, in Astronomy, in Zoology, and in Anthropology. Beauty in the natural kingdom was sought to be explained away by Darwin in utilitarian terms. He said that the pencillings on the petals are helpful as guiding lines to the bee or the butterfly in the process of cross-fertilization. One has, however, to come to God and offer a basketful of love to Him. The plants and animals have derived their descent from one undifferentiated ancestor, and even Darwin had to admit that "the births both of the individual and the species, are equally parts of that grand sequence of events which the mind refuses to accept as the result of blind chance." From among the biologists Benjamin Moore once said, "Given the presence of matter and energy forms under proper conditions and life must come inevitably." But the attitude of empiricism or experimentalism has now pointed the way to the fresh emergence of religion. Although the ancient Doll's House has been demolished, yet God is not crowded out of the procession of things in this multiform universe. Doubt has only made the divine foundation of the city of God stronger by proving that Faith as an inalienable asset of the mind cannot be overthrown.

". . . . . you call for faith ;
I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists.
The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say.

. . . . .

All's doubt in me ; where's break of faith in this?"

The Universe is no longer the fortuitous concourse of fatuities, and the natural phenomena no longer envisage the capricious moods of an Aunt of the Universe that has cocked all things at an arrogant angle to please her favourite. Like the sudden thrilling discovery of a fine mansion or a fount in the thick of the forest, convincing us of human habitation, of which Vijaykrishna speaks, in the physical world we make startling scientific discoveries proving that there is at the heart of things something deeply spiritual. From difference in quantity emerges distinction of quality! An all-red world arises out of the aerial waves of the poet's imagination. But it becomes actually possible when the waves of light are very very small and of particular lengths. Who would expect that the difference in the number of electrons and protons in the atoms would make them differ not merely in quantity but also in quality? The cause of all the difference in quality is the absence of homogeneity in the quantity of their constituent parts. The Nebular Theory tells us that in the 'beginning' there was an ocean of fluid ether (the primal chaos of Milton) interspersed by dynamic particles, which ultimately coalesced into gigantic nebulæ. We cannot realize this without the accompanying notion of an informing power in these ultimate particles.

"Who motion, foreign to the smallest grain,
Shot through the vast masses of enormous weight?"

So we see that science, at first, forced the whole fortress of our faith to capitulate, but to-day the doubts of scientific men are enlightened, and just as they had at first a dark suspicion that God does not exist, they are to-day swayed by the sweet suspicion that God *is*. Jesus of Nazareth said to the father of the boy with twitches of the limbs, "If thou can'st not believe" ; to the poor woman who was magically cured by a touch of the fringe of His garments, "Daughter, your faith has healed you" ; and to the converted courtesan, "Your faith has saved you ; go in peace." Likewise, Vijaykrishna said, "Faith first. If you have doubts you are lost. Have faith. Faith is the word, I say, robust faith. But faith may be enlightened faith, if not intuitional faith: the doubter reasoning honestly, faith comes out of the strife with flying colours and touches the winning post."

Vijaykrishna also discussed the sociological and spiritual problems in the light of science. In that thoughtful lecture on *Parakal* (Life beyond) he spoke thus:

"First, what is death? What is its *raison d' etre?* If the body remains after death, what would you call death? The body remains as inert matter, it becomes bereft of consciousness. All things created by God can be divided into two classes—Spirit and Matter. The spirit has the power of thought and free movement, and also memory. Inanimate matter lacks these qualities. The *Charvakists* as well as some scientists of the modern world, affirm that spirit is independent of matter. Consciousness is neither physical nor chemical quality of matter. . . . . If it were a fact that consciousness inheres in matter or is a product of a certain combination of matter, gigantic masses of matter like the sun, the moon, and the stars would have a directing intelligence in themselves. So it comes to this that consciousness is not an attribute of matter but is the native function of an immaterial Self which we call the Soul. What then is death? It is the disintegration or decomposition of the material drapery. When the tissues in the body are worn-out and cannot carry on their normal activity, the human soul no longer inhabits it. The soul can exercise its conscious and intending will upon the body, that is, it makes use of the body, just as the living inmates of the house make use of the rooms and their doors and windows in the manner they like. We have observed that the soul is an entity that has no relation to material molecules, and, therefore, it does not perish with the body. Matter also does not perish, only its visible and tangible aspect changes. It is easy then to deduce that the soul survives physical death and remains exactly what it is at present, and life beyond the grave is no fiction."

In this passage Vijaykrishna has made a famous scientific observation that even dead matter is not lost. Modern science has proved that the destruction of a piece of matter does not mean the slightest diminution of its quantity or essential qualities. Late in life, Vijaykrishna once said to a disciple of his, "There is a class of people in our country, who worship the Sun. There is a fine logic in this form of worship. The Sun is not matter but energy. The world is made up of energy, and there is nothing but energy, the *chit* element." The scientists formerly asserted that, in the brains, the central controlling force of the bodily system, there are myriads of nerves, and the molecular vibrations, sometimes in throbs or leaps, are indications that the mind is seized with fear or the large sentiment of love. But the modern psychologists have proved that consciousness is posited in an immaterial self. If it is proved that the personality survives and is immutable, the agnostic aspect of science at once disappears, and there can be no question as to the hereafter. For those doubters who do not intuitively perceive the grand truth that there is an over-finite self which informs the tenement of clay, Vijaykrishna argued from a scientific standpoint. He said that man has a sort of religious belief in the next world, and the theistic belief is the strongest and most enduring function of the human soul. The modern psychologists also tell us that man is 'incurably religious'. "Whenever the soul comes to itself as out of surfeit, or sleep, or a sickness and attains something of its natural soundness, it speaks of God." Thus wrote Vijaykrishna:—

"Belief in God is most natural to the human soul. If you look into the depths of your soul in utmost sincerity, the folds of doubt would at once be removed from your inner eye. Had not theistic belief been the most natural and normal tendency of man, if he were to arrive at this belief through a process of hard thinking and judgment, probably no man could ever have known God. In this wide world, all men believe in God, no matter whether civilized or uncivilized, enlightened or ignorant. Go and ask anybody, and he will tell you that he has imbibed his faith spontaneously and needed no schooling. Here is a fine illustration. Once a pious man went to an uncivilized country to instruct its people about the existence of God. On hearing his speech, the savages told him, 'We are not new to it. We have had absolute faith in God. Nobody has to be told that God is. Our faith in God is in our blood, it is no super-imposition. We have not received any instructions as to it from anywhere.' At this, the pious teacher joyfully thanked God and muttered under his breath, 'Gracious thou art, O God'."

By giving a scientific explanation of the hereafter, Vijaykrishna meant that reason only vivifies what already is there. Religion never deals in wares which it is difficult to defend intellectually. After three years' study at the Medical College, Vijaykrishna came out with the jewel of devotion shining the more brilliantly in him, and with the revolutionary idea of initiating the unbeliever into the mysteries of science for the sake of belief. The searcher of Truth is not far removed from the lover of Truth, and Science never sows the dragon's teeth of irreverence.

When Vijaykrishna entered the Medical College and busied himself in examining the human skeleton and the dissection of dead bodies, his old-fashioned mother was thoroughly upset, and the orthodox Brahmin community of Santipur took up a hostile attitude. But of Vijaykrishna may be said as was said of Christ:—"I came not to destroy but to fulfil." . . . . . "It was said to them of old . . . . . . but I say unto you—something very different."

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEVOTED WORKER

The great idealist with his sky-robes spun out of Iris's woof, becomes violently disillusioned at the utter disharmony between the ideal and the reality in this sordid world. Wordsworth joined the French Revolution as a robust optimist, believing that the Revolution would be a great forward-stride in the liberation of liberty and that France, the laboratory of political experiments, would give the world a great example. But the radiant hopes and aspirations that he entertained regarding it, completely evaporated, when France became a veritable mælstrom, and he stood face to face with "this portentious man-devouring sphinx". The mental paradise of order and equilibrium with which he had surrounded himself, was outraged, and the psychic shock was all the more disconcerting, because he had never dreamt that the Revolution would be a history piece of the massacre of the innocents. In this state of spiritual chaos, he turned to Nature and only in Nature, could he find true liberty which obeys the eternal laws.

This happens to every idealist, and Vijaykrishna, the great Promethean, was no exception. Before his very eyes, he found ugliness and squalor in the arena of the Samaj. For a time he led a singularly happy life in the Samaj, but with the lapse of time, when the Brahmo brotherhood and amity seemed to be lost for ever, and the Samaj ceased to be a temple of peace, the red-hot zeal with which he had plunged in its service, was on the wane. The Brahmo Samaj, purged of ceremonialism and paraphernalia of worship, and hierarchy in the forms of work, was so dear to Vijaykrishna that he grappled it to his soul as if with hoops of steel. He once said that he was prepared to shed his life-blood if that would help the Samaj in any way. But now he retired to Santipur with a heavy heart. There he found a sovereign tonic. Nature came to his rescue, diffusing her healing and benignant influences. The cramped atmosphere of the Samaj so much sickened him that, with a heart gnawing with pain, he came out to the country-side, and Nature had her idyls and sentiments for his wearied mind.

It was the night of the full moon in spring. The Master was alone, taking a walk along the Ganges. He walked on, drinking in the peace of Nature. A sweet fragrance was spread all around by the breath of spring. The ethereal lamps were lit and were looking wistfully at the lonely stroller. The stretches of sand in the distance glistened like the purest silver. Near his feet, the river raced merrily, and the tiny waves danced and glittered under the smiling moon-beam, tossing and splitting the moon's reflected face. Some boats were plying, throwing the water up in showers of pearl. The silent beauty of Nature stole into his soul, and amid the waves of vernal air laden with fragrant spray, he was carried out of himself. For several days, he thus went to the river bank, and thanks to Nature's healing balm, he regained his normal frame of mind. The dissonances once more resolved themselves into a Mozartian harmony, and he got the idea that *Bhakti* would be the panacea for all the evils within the Samaj. Vijaykrishna loved Nature in her mystical moods as the ardent truth-seeker would love her, and, therefore, he could never have the poet's tendency of making her lovelier than any apocalyptic dream. Like the bee he sucked the honey of divine love from the successive flowers of mystical experiences.

On his return to Calcutta after a few days' stay at Santipur, Vijaykrishna introduced into the Samaj various innovations, one of which was street-singing. Large bands of Brahmo singers with Vaisnavite musical instruments proceeded along the streets of Calcutta, proclaiming, in noble accents, the name of God which thrilled the hearers, and day after day secured more and more adherents for that faith.

Vijaykrishna felt more and more drawn to Chaitanya. To his friends he talked of the greatness of Chaitanya and the glory of divine Love that makes the *I* merge itself in *Thou*. It is pure unconditional Love which is its own reward and for which trying is no help, for either one loves or one does not, and "the Flute that maddens" really maddened some but left others untouched. In that old Persian tale, the lover forgot himself altogether. In the intensity of true love, he identified himself with his beloved. Twice he called at the door, and twice he had to return baffled. The third time he said, "I am thou", and at once the bride flung open the door for him to get in. So did Chaitanya bid us efface our 'self'. The life of Chaitanya came to be studied with great interest, though He was regarded not as an incarnation of Lord Sree Krishna, absorbing all that was transcendental in Sree Radha to realize for Himself how that Wandering Bride in tears had sought for Him in a previous incarnation (as the Vaisnavas would say), but merely as the Prophet of Nadia.

Nevertheless, the very name of Chaitanya, Who had descended upon the earth from that blessed and eternal and illimitable ocean of divine love as a genius to espouse the souls of men, to break down all fixed liturgy and paralysing formalism, and to preach the sovereignty of the heart, was bound to give the Brahmo Samaj the cult of Love and absolute Self-surrender to Him as the surest guide to lead the *Sadhaka* through the vast wilderness of human dreams, which makes him lose the track and forget the scent and run after inflated nothings, windblown illusions. The devotee, the pious Brahmo, should not merely "zealously attend to fill his odorous lamp with deeds of light", in expectation of the Bridegroom at midnight, but should also surrender his all and himself, to boot, to His mercy, and should have *Bhakti* feelings for Him, the Great Lover, the Great Merciful One. Despite all this, Vijaykrishna could not get the mystic vision of Eternal Beauty and Love which might madden him here and now, for, according to discipline in Hindu mysticism, he was to pass into the realization of the Sovereign Game, the Sportive Actions of God, only after the realization of the Unmanifest *Nirguna* (*Brahman*) and the Unmanifest *Saguna* (*Atman*), the two eternal aspects of the Integral Supreme.

Vijaykrishna forgot all worldly concerns, even himself for the sake of religion, and not content with animated discussions and discourses for hours in the Samaj meetings, he stood with his little band of spirited followers near a gas-light in Calcutta and talked and talked on God and His attributes, till the street-lights died out with their last flickering flash, and the morning appeared in the eastern sky like one pale sheet of yellow light.

Some very fine hymns were composed by Vijaykrishna in imitation of the delicious songs of the great seraphic masters—Vidyapati and Chandidas, which, according to a westerner, perhaps excel, in their touching beauty and exquisite melody, the finest gems in the European *lieder*. At this time, Brahmoism could sway the hearts of the rank and file, for reason appeals only to the intelligentsia, but emotion conquers many whom higher rationalism cannot move. Large audience in the Brahmo Samaj of India drank the milk of the Vaishnavite music, and Vijaykrishna introduced his own brother, Brajagopal, into the Samaj as a *Kirtan* singer, just as Rammohun had introduced a Muhammedan musician, who played on the instruments, while the hymns composed by Rammohun himself or gathered from the Vedas, were sung every Saturday in the Samaj meetings. Thus, through the leadership of Vijaykrishna, were presented, in the Samaj, scenes of the excesses of oriental piety and wholehearted devotion and torrential outburst of love and tears, the like of which had never been in the Adi Samaj with its grand, solemn, quiet, and formal procedure and fixed liturgy. Fixed liturgy in the Adi Samaj (*e.g.* recitations from the Vedas, readings from the Upanishads, sermons on Vedic texts, and songs) was in itself a good thing, but it tended to preclude the sincere projection of the heart of the devotee into the prayers or discourses and moved in a groove of its own. But now the Brahmo Samaj services came to have extempore speeches—the vernacular of the heart—that were absolutely suited to the occasion and were in unison with the feelings evoked.

Vijaykrishna as *Upacharya* could distil his *Bhakti* feelings into the services, and hence they attracted an enormous gathering by their aroma and soul-captivating quality. The audience were carried gaily along the buoyant tide of his emotional ecstasy, and to hear his speeches that left numberless undulations in the hearts of the hearers, there flocked to Calcutta and later to Dacca and other places, to which he paid his august visit, even the people of the sleepy, forgotten villages of East Bengal —villages that have nothing more to boast of and nothing more to curse than the rising waters of the Padma turned to gold by the evening sun. There was manifest such a calm, such a spiritual fervour that made every word alive, every word winged.

When later Vijaykrishna joined the East Bengal Brahmo Samaj, the living flame of *Bhakti* burnt Pentecost over his head. When he rose up to deliver a speech, he lost all control over himself and, in a state of spiritual inebriation, sank into *Samadhi*. The magic of his sight held all spell-bound. Dead silence reigned, but this silence was more eloquent than speech. *"Silet sed loquitur."* The Infinite so overwhelmed him that he felt the Scribe in Walter de la Mare's poem, who said that he could not describe the full compass of his wonders, even if he were to use up all the letters of the alphabet and take a lake for his inkpot. There was a time when his speeches and sermons were eloquent with an eloquence the like of which few could boast of, but now he stood silent before a hall packed to suffocation, hovering between dream and wakefulness, amidst guffaws and a flood of the most genuine tears. The few words that dropped from his lips, the few golden sentences that he uttered, were full of vivid obscurity and the most exquisite emotion. "All words forgotten—Thou Lord and I." Words failed to express the unplumbed depths of his soul. "Words like Nature half reveal and half conceal the soul within." During *Maghotsab,* the *Sankirtan* conducted by Fikir Chand (Kangal Harinath) went on day and night like the ceaseless flow of a divine stream. The songs bloomed anew in every devout heart with a mystical immediacy like a thousand white flowers that burst upon our sight, as the first sungleam tears to the last shred the curtains of darkness and opens up the fairy scene. Like the glint of moonbeam upon the rain-washed leaves, the Master's tearful eyes gleamed bright and inviting. The mysterious Mother was the arch that spanned heaven and earth. The hearts of the audience throbbed at the sight of this child of Nature, the beloved son of the Mother, laughing and weeping and dancing, while keeping time to the crystal flow of the music. A host of gods and goddesses now peopled his vision. *Fiat voluntas tua*.

Nobody denies that soft emotion very often passes into lachrymose sentimentality, but Vaishnavic emotionalism is really the elixir of life. The *Bhakta* is given to ecstatic dance, and you may also detect convulsive twitches of his face and limbs, but deep down in his heart, there is an oceanic calm, a centre of sovereign self-possession. So, when the soul-stirring Vaishnava music as innovated by Chaitanya, the Indian Orpheus, continued, such things as *atmachinta* or self-introspection and *atmavichara* or self-examination could also remain uninterrupted. When the turn for *dhyan* or meditation came, there could be nothing to obstruct it.

Besides being responsible for the Vaishnavite influence on the spiritual culture of the Samaj, Vijaykrishna stabilized the Eastern and Western influences on it. Plato banished poets from his realm. "None should enter who does not know and love Geometry" was written on the door of a famous school. But the ardent seeker of religion knows that "God fulfils Himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world". He is of all and for all and never thinks parochially or provincially or communally. The Book of God is not finished. Religion is an everfresh universal song. His life was a Divine Life and not a Divine Science, to note the distinction of John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist. Since he was the chosen of God, he could breathe life into Pygmalion's statue and build his faith on the golden concrete of respect for all, maintaining the depths of his beautiful dream of love and bliss and keeping at arm's length the narrow-minded sectarian inflicting his own tight-fitting casque on all. In the belvedere of thought, the totality of effect was sought to be produced by a co-ordination as in a wreath of flowers. The Christian influence also worked upon him, so that, according to Christian ethics, he was as susceptible to the sense of sin, as the pupil of the eye is to a speck of dust, and he again and again said that a repentant sinner is as absolved of his sin as Lady Magdalene in the Bible or Ambapali in the Buddhist scriptures. The first song composed by Vijaykrishna was thoroughly saturate with the Christian idea of sin. Once at Lahore, he went to commit suicide at dead of night in the waters of the Ravi, because some sinful thoughts crept into his mind, while he was giving a sermon. He never interfered with the western mode of worship in the Samaj ; those who liked could sit on chairs, and for others, Vijaykrishna made arrangements for seats on the floor in the typically Hindu manner. It was Vijaykrishna again, who rooted out the vestiges of idolatry in the Adi Samaj, hatred of idolatry of any kind being a tenet of Sufism ; and his example cut deep enough.

CHAPTER IX

THE FIGHT FOR TRUTH

After the Bharatavarshiya (of India) Brahmo Samaj had been established, the party of Keshav carried their work with hot enthusiasm. There was the Marriage Act by which early marriage, the cause of the devitalization of the Indians in no small degree, was sought to be abolished, in spite of the religious sanction at the back of it. Keshav brought out important pronouncements from the leading medical men of the country and secured their enthusiastic support. Rammohun had introduced western education into this country with the sagacity and farsightedness of a seer, when the question was mooted as to whether education in this country should be on oriental or occidental lines, although the Sanskrit system of education never escaped his attention. Rammohun had also begun the work of women's education, and now it was Keshav's duty to extend women's education and place them on a footing of absolute equality with men ; for he realized that female education imparted in right lines would not produce mere blue-stockings, but intelligent and cultured women, working with men as their help-meets in the various walks of life. The Adi Samaj, though in deep sympathy with women's cultural advancement and the introduction of useful social reforms, was not prepared to initiate any revolutionary measure and to face the inevitable resistance from the conservative forces. It preferred evolution to revolution and hence sought to put restraint upon the youthful forward band of fearless reformists led by Keshavchandra. Parting of ways between the two parties of the Brahmo movement in the country was, therefore, unavoidable. To the older school Keshav and his party appeared to be too much influenced by western ideas. Devendranath could appreciate Victor Cousin, Fichte, and Fenelon, and he never had any hatred of the West ; but he could never like the idea of transplanting the western ideas to the Indian soil ; just as John Keats reverenced Voltaire and cherished advanced democratic ideas, but never wrote anything in support of the Revolution, of which all great Romantic poets—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron said so much.

Vijaykrishna welcomed the healthy social changes, but he always judged things not by the exterior but by the inner spirit,—the spirit that alone lives and saves. Naturally he was very much aggrieved, when he found that the social changes that were coming about were mechanical, not backed by the spirit within, the force behind. The Brahmo social workers who, in their perfervid zeal, fought hard for Female Education, Inter-dining, Inter-marriage, Widow-marriage, Adult-marriage, Abolition of the *Purdah*, and other nostrums of the social reformer, understood and actually effected only mechanical changes in the body social, which were like refurbishing the dress and the body to the utter neglect of the spirit.

When the cry was raised, "Down with the *purdah*" and there was a great stir and movement among some Brahmos for seating ladies by the side of gentlemen in the prayer-hall, nobody saw through the stupidity of the scheme as much as Vijaykrishna. Not that he wanted to stifle the carrier-pigeon under the roofs of the dovecot, but that he grasped the very essence of liberalism. Vijaykrishna was the direct antithesis of a conservative with a fossilized mind: he did pioneer-work in disseminating the seeds of female emancipation and education and he established schools and formed relief-societies ; he himself taught his wife Yogamaya Devi and also engaged his bosom friend Nagendra Chatterjee as her private tutor. But the idea of abolishing the *purdah* without the inner *Swaraj*, without the freedom of the spirit in which strength is eternal, without the kingdom of ourselves being won back from the legion of foes that have pestered it and turned it into a veritable anarchy, is as laughable and short-sighted a policy as valuing clearness above force, surface-brilliancy above depth, and raiment above body. It is only when men and women are great and free in heart, that they can achieve freedom—freedom that is not the shibboleth of a foaming demagogue or politician, but a reality,—the kind of social freedom that is our precious possession and is also the hegemony of the world.

Vijaykrishna had a much higher and ethereal conception of freedom, when he called upon all to take the vow of eternal slavery to God. To his mind that like a bird had soared up to the higher regions of thought to command a wider and more comprehensive view than all his co-workers and compeers could, bowing down to God's will, sinking our Ego in His greater Ego, making ourselves His working tool and His mouthpiece, was the highest good, so that when we perform feats that the world wonders at, even when Napoleon dictates to six secretaries at the same time, we have nothing to boast of, for we are like dried leaves blown away by the play of Shelley's West Wind. "To bow down to God is true freedom. The real slavery of the spirit is to turn away from the track of truth for fear of social opposition. True freedom consists in maintaining the purity of our soul by reining our passions and making them our slaves and not ourselves their slaves. Neither free association of women with men nor appearing as socially free by abolishing the *purdah,* can be called women's emancipation."

So firmly did he believe in the supremacy and triumph of the Spirit from which springs a life wonderful in potentiality, fecund in greatness, and deep in vitality that, when Devendranath ordered him to go to a particular place for religious preachings, he at once shrank back in fear and told him that he would be obedient to nobody's will but God's. This answer filled Devendranath with great joy, and he poured his blessings upon him. No consideration alien to Truth could storm the Capitole, the *Feste Burg* of the Spirit in him. He was in tune with the Infinite and took refuge with the Inner Guide and Teacher. Even Keshav, his bosom friend, did not escape criticism. After the introduction of the Vaishnavite music into the Samaj, Keshav was turned into a veritable God by his followers, for the wine was too strong for weak brains. Keshav's followers were prepared to address him in extravagant phraseology as 'Lord', 'Master', 'Saviour'. People accused Keshav of having arrogated to himself the supercilious position of a *Guru*. Vijaykrishna deeply resented this, for the idea of divine polymorphism was not consistent with the high principles of Brahmoism. 'Was this man-worship the natural fruit of the engrafted tree superimposed upon the older stock?' thought Vijaykrishna. Evidently the new element could not be such as to create a schism by setting up something against the accepted principles of the Samaj ; the new star that appeared on the horizon, shed a warm radiance that acted as a leaven upon the soil, but never proved the signal for rain and squal. If this emotionalism came in for abuse in some quarters, there was nothing wrong with the recipe like the Faculty of Medicine in Moliere's Comedy. So high an ideal constantly nourished the Master that, whenever he found any spurious growth of tares and briars in the soil, he imposed upon himself the sacred duty of rooting them out, and in so doing, no tie of friendship ever withheld him from correcting the party that was to blame. When those archers threw their arrows at Keshav, no one was more pained at heart than Vijay ; he felt that, unless Keshav were restrained, that umbra of scorn and opposition that tended to swallow up Keshav, would also swallow up the entire Samaj. Vijaykrishna, however, knew that Keshav would be the last person to surround himself with a divine aureole, and that he could not possibly have that state of mind wherein a person comes to over-value himself and love of power shoots up within him like the noisy Tower of Babel. His only quarrel with Keshav was that he ought not to have allowed his followers to run to such excesses. Nothing weighed so much with Vijaykrishna as religion, and his religion, because it was broad-based on Universalism, had always a fine humanism. Vijaykrishna left the Samaj, when his attempts at realizing the principle of Universalism were defeated, and the Samaj was ridden by the phantom of partisanship.

Vijaykrishna was never a party-man. Party-men succeed neither in art, nor in religion, nor in life. The true artist is of the centre, and even the petty bickerings are sublimated by him to the realm of pure literature. "What is murky, little, and obscene is drawn by the graving tool of the artist with never a line in vain, so that it becomes a strong and noble thing, a possession for ever." The true artist imparts even to polemics an indefinable grace and relates them to the larger issues of life: "One touch of Nature maketh all the ages kin", so that even from a piece of polemical literature, we derive the same joy as the aeronaut feels in the swiftest non-stop flights or the Indian experiences "shooting broken rapids in a frail canoe". Likewise, party-spirit or sectarianism is the bane of religion which is not for a coterie or party, but is all and for all. Party-men in society fall when their party is wrecked. The party is the cause of their rise, and the party is the cause of their fall. Party-men like meteors scour through the world with a trail of light, but are soon spent. If Vijaykrishna were a party-man in the Samaj, he would not have impressed himself so much on us, and it was his universal outlook, his realization of the total unity of God, that has raised him, more than any other feature, to the rank of the immortals, the man-gods and has made him a great *Mahatma* not only of this age in our country, but so unusual a phenomenon even in her Methuselah-long history. If he was the root-cause of a breach with the parent Samaj, leading to the rise of the Brahmo Samaj of India, and if he most unsparingly criticised Keshav's party for their exuberance, it was not because he wanted to be the leader of a spiritual faction, but because he wanted to purge the Samaj of its defects, to strike at it only to cure it, just as the surgeon opens the abscess only to heal it.

Matters were set right through his mediation. But once again there was a rift in the lute. It was occasioned by the Kuch Behar Marriage. This added the last straw to the camel's back. At this time, Keshav was really dogmatising in certain matters without giving people time and scope to understand their reasonableness, and amidst a great pother there was a further secession within the

Samaj. This was the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. These protests and party-strifes only show Vijaykrishna's universal outlook and knock at the head of any such false notion that he was a party-man, because it was chiefly he who supplied the motive force when the Brahmo Samaj of India and the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj were called into being. Vijaykrishna wrote a pamphlet under the name *Samaj Shashan* on the occasion of the Kuch Behar Marriage, and in this he took up the problem of the position of the individual in society. Although, with the advance of civilization, people have come more and more to realize that the society and the individual are inter-related entities, and that this happy inter-relatedness is the very soul (which Emperor Hadrian calls, "*animula vagula blandula*") of the social organism, yet the question of their mutual rights and duties has remained where it was. The great Italian poet Dante, in his book *De Monarchia* written at the height of his fortune, tells us that this freedom becomes a reality, only when the judgment altogether sets the appetite in motion and is, in no measure, anticipated by it. According to Aristotle in *De Simpliciter Ente,* that which exists for the sake of itself and not of some other, is free. Vijaykrishna spoke of the modern society as a living organism, and it was his firm belief that if the individuals be not bound together, they must get shrivelled in the wilderness of arid individualism like men that cannot respond to the varied stimuli from outside, though endowed with an elaborate nervous system. Yet the individual must have his *tapas,* and it is cnly in solitude, far from the madding crowd, that one can grow great like the baytree or go down into himself and commune with God in a semi-trance. Thus wrote the Master:—

"Three things are needed for the existence and growth of society. I mean, Unity, Generosity, and Discipline. Some men live together, because they have a common aim. Men must agree, at least in a few points, in order to form a society. Take any society you like, any that exists in this world—religious, political, or literary. You will find that men who have grouped themselves to form those societies, are bent upon a common interest. . . . . Notwithstanding this unity of purpose in which society has originated, the opinions and sentiments of all social beings can hardly be alike. As the physiognomy of one person differs from another's, so their tastes also differ. A certain conformity to the broad principles of social life being guaranteed, the individuals must be allowed a whole particular kingdom in which they may reign alone. This freedom must be consistent with social order and equity. Whenever this stream of generosity dries up, society dies. Another thing is of supreme importance. That is Discipline. Man is so constituted that, at any time, he may degenerate into a self-willed creature. When this is so, there must be an elaborate code to guard the morals of the social members. . . . . Some there are who are so hard-hearted that they make a show of social discipline to carry out their wicked schemes under a deceptive exterior. Besides, there are others so unthinking that they regard those insisting on social discipline, in the light of tyrants. One example will suffice to bring out the value of such discipline. A society is just like a human body. Just as a hurt, received in any part of the body, sends its repercussion through the whole body, so in society the injury sustained by one person never leaves another untouched. . . . Similarly it so happens in society. The good of one leads to the good of another. As all the bodily organs work harmoniously in respect of vitality and animation, so all the social units have a single aim, and they run the same race. This is called Unity. Although the organs of the body act homogeneously in the maintenance of the health of the body and the increase of physical comforts, yet they are specialised in their functioning. Everybody knows that the food-stuff being properly digested and assimilated by the organs goes to form blood upon which the sustenance of the body depends. Despite their united efforts in the preservation and production of this life-blood, these organs work differently for the digestion and assimilation of the food taken, and in this they justify their existence. In a like manner, both the individual and the society can prosper, when the individuals respect the broad principles of social life without stifling their personality. The body cannot be in health, when the eyes and ears are worked to the utmost to the exclusion of the functioning of the other organs of the body. No society can flourish, if a dead level of uniformity be set for all. For this, individual freedom is a necessity. To allow people to enjoy this inalienable personal liberty, is to be generous. But liberty must not be confused with license, for, while liberty is a blessing, license is a curse. The individual, setting himself up against the known principles of social life in a mood of self-indulgence, is as guilty as the tongue is, when it licks up poison that is sure to put the body to death. As the foot should not go out of its way, and the tongue should not take pernicious food, so a social unit should not do a moral wrong. The sores on the tongue and the foot are to be healed by the application of some soothing balm, so the criminals in society should be corrected by proper admonitions, so that they may not repeat their wrongs. Discipline must be rigidly enforced, otherwise society will decay. In enforcing discipline, the proper bounds must not be overstepped, and although it is sometimes abused, it is the right recipe for social diseases. The child that is sick must be suffered to swallow bitter gall."

Vijaykrishna applied these principles to the Brahmo Samaj and began his violent polemics against Keshav, because in the Kuch Behar Marriage, he became dogmatic and instead of regarding liberty as a social contract, made it a personal affair only. The Master wrote again:—

"The moment a person is worshipped as an incarnation of God or the doctrine of mediatorship is held, the moment God is believed to have form, the Brahmo Samaj takes up the cudgels to enforce rigorous discipline. The Samaj sets itself to correct those who believe in the multiplicity of gods or encourage the evils that are rampant in the name of Caste or do something antagonistic to the growth of the idea of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Those who would encourage child-marriage and the plurality of marriage and be the direct cause of social degradation, would be the victims of its bitterest attacks. The Brahmo Samaj would mercilessly treat those who would refuse to bow down to social discipline and seek the idiot's pleasure of gratifying self-will. The Brahmo Samaj would move its engines of repression against them, so long they would continue to be guilty of this offence. . . . The Samaj would also wipe off the tears from the eyes of a repentant sinner. The discipline of the Samaj, though rigorous, leaves ample room for the operation of the principles of holiness, generosity, and love."

None knew more than Vijaykrishna how to fight against wrong, to lay down the ghost of evil, in pursuance of Truth and in a spirit of general good-will towards humanity. And he always attained the desired end ; he never fought in vain.

CHAPTER X

THE GREAT MISSIONARY AND THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION

The mission department was organized by Keshav Chandra after the secession from the Adi Samaj at Jorasanko, but the idea originated with Vijaykrishna. Of the seven missionaries of the time Vijaykrishna was undoubtedly the greatest and most enthusiastic.

In telling the story of Vijaykrishna's missionary activities, we cannot do better than bring together what Sivanath Sastri has remarked about him in various places in *History of the Brahmo Samaj*. "Largely as the result of the exertions of this first band of missionaries, fifty-four samajes had sprung up in various parts of the country before this time and most of them received repeated visits from the itinerant preachers. Bijoy Krishna Goswami had visited Eastern Bengal as early as 1863, and had caused considerable stir by his fervid utterances. He was followed by Aghore Nath Gupta, who joined the Brahmo school of Dacca and became the centre of a body of earnest workers. Accompanied by Bijoy Krishna Goswami and Aghore Nath Gupta, Mr. Sen visited Faridpore, Dacca and Mymensingh and other places in Eastern Bengal towards the end of 1865. . . . . . . Mr. Sen shortly returned to Calcutta, leaving Bijoy Krishna in the field to consolidate the work he had commenced, who in his turn carried the fire far and wide. . . . . . The year 1867 opened with a trumpet call in the *Indian Mirror* headed "Brahmos, Arise" and an earnest appeal for renewed zeal in carrying the banner of the new faith far and wide. The appeal was soon followed by the commencement of extensive mission operations. Before the year 1866 had drawn to its close, great efforts were made to get ready a number of publications, including a collection of texts from the scriptures of different nations. to be placed in the hands of the missionaries, who were on the point of starting in different directions. One contingent consisting of Bijoy Krishna Goswami, Aghore Nath Gupta, and Jadu Nath Chakravarty started for Eastern Bengal, making Barisal their first head-quarters. Here the new spirit was running high. . . . . . From Barisal Aghore Nath Gupta went to Tipperah and Chittagong and Bijoy Krishna Goswami went to Dacca, whilst Jadu Nath Chakravarty remained at Barisal in charge of the mission-work there and also acted as teacher in a school specially started for Brahmo ladies. Wherever Bijoy Krishna Goswami and Aghore Nath Gupta went, new converts were made and their preachings caused wide-spread ferment. . . . . . When the members were busy in laying down the constitution of the Samaj (the Sadharan Samaj), the newly appointed preachers (Bijoy Krishna Goswami, Ramkumar Vidyaratna, Sivanath Sastri, Ganesh Chandra Ghosh) were carrying its banner far and wide and propagating the new faith with great fervour in distant parts. Pandit Bijoy Krishna Goswami and Babu Ganesh Chandra Ghosh were working in Eastern Bengal, Pandit Ramkumar Vidyaratna was visiting Northern Bengal and Assam and Pandit Sivanath Sastri was making a tour in Bihar and the N.W. Provinces. They visited not less than 28 places during the year (1285 B.S.), and everywhere their enthusiasm was met with warm response, and new sympathisers sprang up in all directions. . . . Bijoy Krishna Goswami paid a third visit to Mymensingh during the year 1868; and brought with him the *Bhakti* agitation that had begun to shake Mr. Sen's party in Calcutta at the time. Mymensingh became flooded with the new stream. People began to sing enthusiastically the new *Sankirtan* hymns brought from Calcutta and also others composed by Bijoy Krishna himself. During this third visit Bijoy Krishna laid the foundations of a new *mandir*. The old *mandir* had become too old and badly needed repairs. The members thought it waste of money to attend to those repairs, so they decided upon building a new one. . . . . . . The old *mandir* was accordingly sold, and a new piece of land was secured where Bijoy Krishna laid the foundation stone. . . . . Towards the end of 1865, soon after the consecration of the new *mandir* (at Barisal) Pandit Bijoy Krishna Goswami . . . . . paid a visit to Barisal and stirred up quite a new life by his lectures and ministrations. Moved by one of his eloquent addresses delivered in the new *mandir*, Babu Rakhal Chandra Roy made a public declaration of his acceptance of the principles of the Brahmo Samaj, which caused considerable commotion in the local community. Rakhal Chandra took the missionary visitor to his Lakhutia house, and his young wife Soudamini also formally accepted Brahmoism under the influence of the new missionary."

What Vijaykrishna did as a missionary is *Karma Yoga* of the highest order. God ordained that Vijaykrishna should work as a missionary of the Samaj, for this stage of *Karma* was necessary to bring out the best in him. As the physical body receives heat and air, so the real man absorbs within him certain powers of the universe and fusing them in the centre, in the melting-pot, that is, the soul, sends them off to form a tendency, a *samskara* ; and just as water corrodes brick and stone, so *Karma* wears off the covering, the closed vase. And once the covering is gone and the 'sheaths' are ripped open, the soul sees the Self, God in everything and everything in God, by letting off the light of knowledge that is in it. The soul of the *Sadhaka* cannot see itself as being posited in God, unless through *Karma* he learns the 'open sesame' of the unknown treasury, unless an entry, a passport is secured to the infinite library of the universe that is in his own self.

In order that Vijaykrishna might attain this supreme knowledge, *Brahmajnan*, God threw upon him this sacred task, the trials and hardships, the duties and obligations of a missionary. In Vijaykrishna's activities as a missionary, we find love, truth, and unselfishness not as moral figures of speech but as forming his highest ideal. And that is why this stage of *Karma* through which he passed, was a purificatory process, the first stage of the Mystic Way, and not *Karma* which in our case is selfish and egoistical, forging chains for us and involving a painful reaction that at once proves the non-existence of love and freedom. The man who can take up *Karma* with no other design than pleasing God, without looking forward to the fruits, good or bad, becomes a moral giant whose power is illimitable and like energy in the outer world, is so tremendous in its working capacity, because it is not out-going. And Vijaykrishna did so and became so. *Karma* is a good thing, it helps the attainment of salvation ; and God Himself is very active, and the whole universe, the shadow of "bright effulgence of bright essence increate" dwindles into nothing, if God ceases from action even for a moment. And God dislikes most the idlers, the people in whom *Tamas*, one of the triple forces, whose equilibrium Nature is, predominates. But the rush of life, the continuous whirl of breathless activity that leaves no respite, no fragrant leisure, to allow the noble thoughts to burn like frankincense, is as much an evil as inaction ; as, in the natural world, the extreme positive and the extreme negative are the same, and the very rapid vibrations and the very slow vibrations are similar, because both we do not see.

As a missionary Vijaykrishna had to busy himself night and day, but work could not absorb the whole of his being. Even in the midst of preaching, lecturing, visiting distant places on foot, treating patients, and doing all sorts of humanitarian work, he was never carried beyond the atmosphere of the inner man. The atmosphere of Santipur always governed him. In so far as this was true, Vijaykrishna was the highest *Karma Yogin* mastering the secret of work. The true *Karma Yogin* is intensely working, but his mind is as calm and placid as a sheet of water without a ripple. This was very true of Vijaykrishna. Proceeding through the thick of difficulties as he did, he was denied rest, his health broke down alarmingly, he was attacked with heart-disease that seemed incurable, and he became an invalid for life. And yet he would not stop. On and on he went—the God within him urged him forward,—under the burning tropical sky and through deserted fields and marshes ; the whole day passed, and yet he had not a morsel of bread ; he drank the dirty water of pools and appeased his hunger with mud. Though as a missionary and *Upacharya* he could feel himself to be the custodian of the spiritual assets of the people committed to his care, he never ceased to be a merciless critic of himself. He felt life intensely and did everything feelingly, for, though apparently without respite and in the whirl of breathless activity, he always hovered on the calm air, the limpid spaces of thought. He had a splendid active life and a contemplative inner life, and the true *Karma Yogin* that has dedicated himself to the service of suffering humanity in which God is most reflected, is always "Ramdas born in one body with Shivaji, Mazzini mingled with Cavour." That explains why he was determined to take his life for such a trifle and found himself at the parting of ways so frequently and so abruptly. He did never make himself "the immobile axis, the coping-stone of the dovecot" but was all life and movement, going to find Him through every thought and action, —journeying on and on to the sapphire lake of Eternity to unite at last with the Beloved One, away from the mischievous fairies of the world. Since his life was not summed up in his public activity, he had a sacred inner world full of voiceless stillness and meditative calm, resembling the deep stream with a ruffled surface.

Everything in Vijaykrishna's life was to the purpose, every occurrence showed in it the rough sketch of the future. It seemed as though his life was mapped out beneath his feet. He was ordained by God to study in the Medical College in Calcutta for acquiring medical knowledge sufficient for treating patients. It was not necessary for him to pass the examination, and he left the college just before the final examination, as stated before.

Whenever he saw around him people crying for help like so many gulls fluttering their wings, this self-giving youngman, full of love that contains its satisfaction within itself, could no longer be restrained, and bubbling over with enthusiasm, he took upon himself the sacred duty of Œdipus, who would free Thebes from the talons of the Sphinx or die for her. So strongly did he identify himself with the miseries and sufferings of the people around him that he actually went to commit suicide, when he found the people of Barisal in a depraved condition. This comes about when the partition falls off, and the magic lantern of supreme knowledge projects our self on the screen of the entire humanity. He made himself one with humanity in all its tragic nakedness during the pilgrimage of his *Wanderjahre* and *Lehrjahre* and wore himself out in its service like one possessed with a sacred madness. In this period, which we may call 'a hive of religious education', 'a High School of the Spirit', Vijaykrishna's principal aim was to preach Brahmoism, but these kinds of help like spreading education among boys and girls and nursing patients, relieved his chief work only to intensify its effect on the people, and his aim was fixed. One of the slogans of the modern world is that it must be made safe for humanity. To have love for humanity and to render service to it, one must have sympathetic imagination: this sympathetic imagination is a divine virtue, but it must reach its last refinement in a realization of the spiritual affinity between man and man ; else it is often the cause of exaggerated melancholy and a lot of vain bemoaning. Men are all alike, and it is the same man, the same spirit, everywhere. The giver of spiritual knowledge that Vijaykrishna was, he was certainly the highest giver, for the spiritual help is the greatest help that can be rendered unto humanity. To impart this spiritual knowledge was now the grand mission of his life, and the other kinds of help in the shape of distribution of medicine to the malaria-stricken poor, establishment of night-schools, girl's schools, were only subsidiary to it. And under the head *Lokasreya* does not come only social service. Thanks to his untiring efforts, people were converted in large numbers to Brahmoism, 'the World-Religion to which the World-Spirit moves'.

Learning that the Pirilis of Baganchra, a petty village in the district of Jessore, were in a miserable plight, he at once ran to their help, and by helping them spiritually, he relieved their wants and removed their miseries for ever. In order that he might be of immediate and constant help to these persecuted people of Baganchra, he actually shifted his abode from Calcutta to that obscure village. The people of that village found in him their guide, philosopher, and friend. How marvellously Vijaykrishna cured numerous patients by prescribing for them those medicines that his visitant had told him! Wherever his own medical knowledge failed, the departed soul of Dr. Durga Charan Banerjee came to his help. In treating patients, Vijaykrishna showed such dutifulness as was possible in none but him. Though his family was on the verge of starvation, and he himself went without food for days together, he never accepted any fee from his patients. Vijaykrishna feared none but God, for he had that "fearlessness" which the Vedas teach us, and he had a conviction that God, Who feeds plant-life in the desert and the fish in the superincumbent layers of the ocean, would also provide for him, that

"All needful things would come unsought,
To genial faith, still rich in genial good."

He walked quite a number of miles a day for treating patients. And the patients he visited everyday numbered about thirty or thirty-five. Once for visiting a patient he jumped into the swollen waters of the Ganges during a storm. The river was splashing and gurgling with a terrible aspect, and the ferry-boats had ceased to ply. And yet, true to his word, he must go to see his patient on the other side of the Ganges. The anointed of God that he was, he reached the other bank in perfect safety, fighting his way through the billows. People simply wondered at the uncommon bravery and august personality of such a man, who fears not to die for the sake of others! He always judged himself very severely, and at one time when he found a patient getting worse under his treatment, he gave up practising medicine for ever.

Obeying the will of God and being a passive agent in His hands, Vijaykrishna underwent such hardships as few ever did. Wedded to Yogamaya Devi, the daughter of Ram Chandra Bhaduri, on his first coming to Calcutta as a student of the Sanskrit College, Vijaykrishna by this time had a family to maintain. But even as a householder he held up the highest ideal of sacrifice. Yogamaya Devi was, both in name and action, the Holy Mother Herself. She was her husband's most loving and faithful companion. Her marriage took place while she was merely a tender girl of six. However much this early marriage, regarded sacrosanct until very recently in our country, might reap the scorn of a Miss Mayo, it was a beautiful institution in India. Vijaykrishna's married life had a sweetness all its own. Ram Chandra Bhaduri's family was in a state of abject poverty, and immediately after the marriage, the duty of maintaining the father-in-law's family also devolved upon him. But as Vijaykrishna, like St. Francis, made "Lady Poverty" his companion, his own family was quite a burden to him. The marriage was now consummated, and he had four daughters, Santoshini, Premamala, Premasakhi, and Santisudha, and a son Jogajivan. In this family life, Vijaykrishna made such sacrifices as were suited to his *Asrama* and were no less glorious than those he did as a *Sannyasin* in his after life, for one of the principles of *Karma Yoga* is "Each is great in his own place." In the Puranic story, the *Sannyasin* that rejected the princess who had selected him for her husband on account of his wonderful beauty, is as great as the birds and their young ones that burnt themselves to death in the fire to provide food for the princess and the king's men who had taken shelter underneath their tree. The *Sannyasin* had renounced the world, and hence the company of a woman was loathsome to him, but to the young birds that belonged to *Grihasthasrama,* hospitality at the cost of life was the highest duty.

Vijaykrishna refused to accept the allowance proposed to be granted to him by Devendranth when he embarked on the career of a missionary. He refused the presents made to him by that great Samajist on the occasion of the name-giving ceremony of his grandson. Though reduced to the last stage of poverty, he never asked for anything from anybody. The whole family was starving from day to day, and yet how he maintained his principles entrenched in noble idealism! It was sacrifice in no drawing-room sense of the term. It was sacrifice infinitely higher than that of the Japanese Samurai or of the most warm-hearted of patriots in any country. Nobody denies the greatness of such public service as a consummation of the enlarging self ; but any sacrifice, any work, however great or good, does not become work of love and freedom, *Yajna* in the *Gita* sense, unless the fruits of action are dedicated to the Dispenser of *Karma* alone, and there is ever the consciousness of the non-agency of the self. Vijaykrishna had that direct spiritual knowledge which is a key to the world of *Karma,* and the man who possesses this key ("Thine too, this immortal key, My Boy") conquers the evils of life, attains liberation, and, by unlocking the treasure-house of his own soul, finds within it "God's plenty."

Day after day Vijaykrishna had to go without food, and yet his family knew no sorrow. No clouds ever were seen on his wife's face, no anxious thoughts consumed them, they never thought of the morrow. He had his soup made out of the weeds that grew plentifully in his yard. After a hard day's unremitting toil, Vijaykrishna returned home in the evening. That day he had not a farthing in his pocket. Vijaykrishna forgot that he was without food and was wholly absorbed in the thought that God metes out such punishment to man, when he aggrandises the little ego and forgets to depend upon Him. Dependence on God's mercy and independence of spirit were his, and into that blessed world of exclusive religious pre-occupation, the thought of maintaining himself and his family could find no entrance. He silently went to bed. Just then, Jadunath Chakravarty, a pious Brahmo friend of his, came to him for religious discussions. Jadu Babu understood the situation, but he had only a pice and a half in his pocket. Some puffed rice (*Muri*) was bought. Vijaykrishna with his family ate this humble food with relish as the generous gift of God. Next day, Kanti Babu, another Brahmo friend, helped the starving family with eight annas. Just at the time of dinner, there came two guests. After the guests had eaten their fill, what remained was scarce sufficient for a mouth. So, this day also the whole family practically starved. The fine white fire of this mood lights every action of his. Such seacrifices are sights worthy of the gods. Such a shining example of sacrifice, in the name of religion, will assuredly gleam, gleam long and unflickering like the purest carbuncle in the midst of so much darkness that wraps us.

Once he had to undertake a long steamer journey. He had no pice in his pocket wherewith to buy food, but he never let any of his friends in the steamer get scent of this. And he starved for five or six days together! That is why I have called him a mad man of God. The man who "on the honeydew hath fed and drunk the milk of Paradise" has not his vision bounded by this little horizon of a few feet. His vision enjoys unbounded extension, bliss, and illumination, and he "floats obedient to the stream," setting all counter-forces at naught.

To such a silent man, possessed of the hermit's strength, difficulties are indications of God's mercy. The story of those trials and his magical escape each time, reads like a romance, a romance that is no less entertaining and no less a tissue of absurdities than any we know from Sir Patrick Spence to Scott's Waverley. The spiritual world is as much a land of romance as the world of the Arabian Nights. Like a knight-errant who has to submit to trials to prove himself worthy of his love, the *Sadhaka* has to face a legion of foes. Once when Vijaykrishna was proceeding from Dacca to Mymensingh on foot, accompanied by a guide, a wild buffalo suddenly came in his way. The wild animal was running at a tremendous pace and looked very furious. The poor guide was at his wit's end, but Vijaykrishna began his prayer to God ; and silent prayer, prayer that compels, never goes without its meed. The devotee having stood the test, the unexpected happens to his rescue. A puff of wind blew away the tall grass in the field and opened to view a big hollow, supposed to have been dug by a potter. The wind retarded the progress of the buffalo. In the meanwhile, the guide led Vijaykrishna to that refuge, and they were out of harm's way. The buffalo came running but missed his prey.

On another occasion, he had to go through the Padma on a boat. All on a sudden there came a thunder-storm.

The Padma was rolling in huge billows. A wave dashed past the boat, and it went down into the water. Some fishermen on the bank saw the boat sink. They could do nothing. They gave him up for lost, and the interminable waves with their mischievous laughter ran as fast as they could, as if they had no time to wait for the death of a man. To the astonishment of the spectators, Vijaykrishna was cast on shore with the boat. The fishermen did not know that the unseen Master presided over the scene. When Vijaykrishna regained consciousness, he found himself surounded by a band of fishermen who were warming his limbs with fire.

At another time, Vijaykrishna lost his way in the hills of Vindhyachal. In the midst of a wood, he found a house where he sheltered himself for the night. The house, a heap of ruins, was frequented by bandits. At dead of night, some robbers came with their booty and, fearing that the stranger might have potentialities concealed within him, they turned him out and even determined to take his life. Their best efforts failed, and their wickedness also did not go unpunished. That very night the tumbling edifice collapsed, and most of the robbers were buried alive. Their leader who narrowly escaped death, went out in search of Vijaykrishna the following morning, and finding him seated under a tree in an unconcerned mood, he fell down at his feet and told him what had happened.

Such trials are the concomitants of an advanced stage of *Sadhana*, and it is through such difficulties and dark ways that God pilots the soul of the elect to the world of light.

The obsessional theory of the Sankarites that *Karma* and *Jnana* cannot live in amity under the same roof, will make this period of the Master's life appear paradoxical to us. Because they were combined, the forces which *Apara Prakriti* marshals to hoodwink the *Sadhaka* under the flag of *Karma,* were easily overthrown, and the *Bhakti* feeling, deriving its elan from them, worked and expressed itself through him like the electric current that has found the powerful condenser of personality. Like the olive leaf brought by the dove sent from the Ark by Noah after the Flood, the centre of activity of the doer was the determinant of a new creation in his mental world, raised into the full flood of spiritual and supra-mental knowledge, compared to which our material knowledge is a bagatelle. When he reached the state of *Brahma-Nirvana,* the state of ultimate perfection, he came into the full light of a new supra-conscient existence, and consequently his entire mental world underwent a luminous transmutation. He still performed actions, but every action of his was now but a window opening on the Divine Reality ; for then he extracted out of *Karma* the highest knowledge, like the supreme musician in Browning's poem, "framing out of three sounds not a fourth but a star", and being without desires and out of the zone of the triple *Gunas,* he performed actions, under the sway of the Cosmic Will that was working through him and was not felt as an independent force as such. Kant says, "Ought is here out of place, because the volition is already in unison with law." Or as Addison says, inclination will at length come over to reason, though we can never force reason to comply with inclination. There is no moral 'oughtness', but *Karma* continues all the same.

CHAPTER XI

THE HALF-GLEAMS OF AN AWAKENING

Vijaykrishna felt more and more attached to Chaitanya. Some time before, he sought the advice of a pious Vaishnava of Santipur, Harimohan Pramanik, as to how he could love and worship his God, the Beloved. Harimohan advised him to procure a copy of Sree Chaitanya Charitamrita by Kabiraj Goswami and go through it. To Vijaykrishna the life of Chaitanya seemed all music, as rich and moving as the Music of the Spheres. It was to him the discovery not of a new world, but of a world which had always been his natural home. It was a discovery as that of Keats, when he read Spenser's "Faerie Queene" at the suggestion of his friend Cowden Clarke and "went through it like a young horse through the spring-meadow ramping." Sree Chaitanya Charitamrita was to become Vijaykrishna's constant companion later in life, and he read it as many as thirty-three times. Now, as he read it for the first time, Chaitanya's wonderfully expansive heart, his broad-based humanity, his sweetness and emotional beatitude—all attracted him with an immediacy that only proved his spiritual dynamism.

As a strict Brhamo Vijaykrishna did not believe in the *avatarhood* of God; so that he did not agree with the Vaishnavas, when they said that Sree Chaitanya is God bodying Himself directly to rescue the souls of men in the *civitas dei* by preaching the efficacy of repeating the Lord's name, and indirectly to feel Himself as Sree Radha, the queen of the *Gopis*, with whom Sree Krishna had played a catch-me-if-you-can sort of game in the 'Romancero' pastorals. Vijaykrishna warmly appreciated the intensity of the unreserved self-giving of the *Gopis* and the red-heat of their love for Sree Krishna, the ball of attraction. But he did not take Chaitanya for an incarnation of God, although according to the law of spiritual inversion, this prophet of Nadia, this super-mystic with the lyre of his heart constantly vibrant under the impress of living ecstasy, might be believed to have realised his identification with the Divine. As Vijaykrishna was from the prime of life a devotional mystic, following the path which, as the Zohar containing the traditions of Israel calls it, is the path of ecstasy, he was attracted towards that cult of love which Vaishnavism has made its central credo. The gospel of love is manifested in its transcendentalism in Vaishnava philosophy alone. If Christ was Divine Grace incarnate, Chaitanya was Divine Love personified. Had he not been a devotional mystic, had his life in the Samaj been merely a history of a fine intuitive soul, of a spirit of communion with the least trace of emotionalism as was that of the great Devendranath, Vijaykrishna would not have been so much attracted towards Chaitanya. The uniqueness of his life was that it was a life of mysticism which is, as somebody says, a liberal education in religion, as Kabalism was a liberal education in Israel, and hence, for the attainment of Religion which means Reunion, he always trod the path of emotional experience which forms the central credo in Vaishnavism. This explains why he was so much moved as to graft some elements of Chaitanyaism to the tree of Brahmoism.

Vijaykrishna had not by this time merely imbibed a sense of utmost reverence towards Chaitanya. He had actually seen the vision beatific. One night at a blessed hour, as he sat alone in meditation at "Bharat-Asram", (not a convent but a prayer-association recently founded by the joint efforts of himself and Keshav) he heard a knock at the door. Of somebody calling him in this manner at that unearthly hour, there was not the ghost of a chance. It was a mystic call as thrilling as that of the Traveller in Walter de la Mare's poem. In a trance, Vijaykrishna opened the door. It was Chaitanya come to initiate him. With him were three luminous presences —Adwaita, Nityananda, and Sreebas. Adwaitacharyya was the glorious ancestor of Vijaykrishna, and naturally he came to introduce his worthy descendant to Chaitanya. According to Vaishnavism, the grace of Nityananda must descend upon the devotee, if he is to enjoy ineffable beatific bliss and rise above the fleeting pleasures with which 'the Earth fills her lap'. Sreebas came, because he was the devoted follower of Chaitanya. Chaitanya bade Vijaykrishna accept his discipleship, and he ran to a neighbouring well to perform a hasty bath. (The following morning Yogamaya Devi was struck with wonder, when she discovered the wet clothes of her husband, lying near the well.) Although Vijaykrishna scorned the idea of submitting to a Guru very much, he lost for the moment all control over himself. Something was transmitted to his soul, and it sent a repercussion through his entire being.

But Chaitanya did not make him leave the hive all at once. If it were so, his life would not have this uniqueness as a chapter of total human spiritual experience. But he was not like Antaeus, who touched the earth again before taking a new flight. Already a traveller in the path of joyous Light, he was destined to climb to the highest state in the attainment of Light and Love as the ultimate certitude, but an abrupt transition could not be desired, if he were to represent in his person the highest ideal of discipline or *Sadhana* for the modern age in our country. Chaitanya came not to haul him out of the Samaj but only to show that he was His elect and, at the end, He alone would be the goal.

After this Vijaykrishna went to Benares in course of his missionary activities, and there the need for a Guru was pointed out to him by the celebrated Trailanga Swami. Vijaykrishna's direct entrance into the Swamiji's own room startled the Swamiji's own followers, who were not allowed to get in so freely. Trailanga Swami at that time observed the vow of silence, and yet he actually talked at times with Vijaykrishna, whom he treated very affectionately. At other times, he wrote the reply to his queries on the ground with a piece of chalk. There could not be any need for physical articulation, for their souls were united in comradeship and could speak to each other. The Swamiji had a luminous inner vision of the great *Mahatma* that Vijaykrishna was, and he again and again admired his solid parts which, he said, would wear well. One day the Swamiji took him to the temple of Goddess Kali and casting a quantity of his urine out of the cup of his palm on the idol, wrote on the ground—"This is the holy water of the Ganges." It was the greatest surprise to Vijaykrishna, bred up in the rigid school of puritanism. The Swamiji's followers told him that their master had risen to that rarefied height where there was nothing to discriminate. One day the Swamiji asked him to get ready for initiation. This drew a laugh from Vijaykrishna, for the idea of submitting to an earthly Guru was even then farthest from his mind. The Swamiji was quick to realize this and said, "The sacred possession of your heart would not be a wondrous moving reality to you, unless and until you would go to a Guru. I am not your Guru. You will meet him when the time for it is ripe. For the present, I am only fulfilling God's bidding." With this, he told him certain *mantras*.

The immediate need for a Guru was driven home to his mind with greater enduring effect by that saint whom he chanced to meet at Mechua Bazar in Calcutta. It was a slender chance, but momentous issues hung upon it. The cult of mediatorship in religious life now possessed the soul of Vijaykrishna, and he was on the threshold of a new career. What served as his buoy in every stream Vijaykrishna had to chart, was his living conviction that not a blade of grass moves without His will ; and now that the truth of truths dawned on him that the Guru is an indispensable factor in higher spiritual life, he went to find him, but with his mind always steeped in illumined silence, the result of that conviction. There was absorptive eagerness, but it never threw him off his feet. With the attainment of every truth which is a triumph of light over darkness and from which others follow as from one torch a thousand others are lit, Vijaykrishna was on a speedier march to the house of God, and, if at any time, as in the present case, his action involved self-contradiction, there is no ground for our surprise ; for, with the advance of culture, man has ever contradicted himself ; and to-day with the very creative affirmations of modern science, we are overhauling the citadel of our older faith. Being convinced that no real aspirant for religion can do without a Guru, Vijaykrishna set out in the vagrancy of God, and every pulsation of his being now sang the Guru. Though the Brahmo leaders were ardent free-thinkers, seeking to free the holy name of religion from the appendage of ceremonialism, yet to them the cult of Guru seemed flagrantly irreconcilable to the time-spirit. Nothing could be farther from the truth. As Vivekananda puts it with marvellous force in *The Sages of India*:—"Krishna is not the authority of the Vedas, but the Vedas are the authority of Krishna himself ; his glory is that he is the greatest teacher of the Vedas that ever existed. So as to other incarnations ; so with our sages." The greatness of the Guru is that he does not speak with authority, but what he speaks is the authority.

There cannot be any manner of doubt as to the truth that the Guru is the only awakener of the serpent-power in man. This slumbering serpent-power which implies the latent sub-conscious divine energy in man, the divinity that sleeps, has been believed by the Tantras to reside at the foot of the spinal column in the human body, and when it is awakened by the Guru by the transmission of dynamic spirituality, it becomes joined to the Absolute that lies in the thousand-petaled lotus in the highest centre of the cerebrum. Vedantism that relies on intellectual realization, denies the efficacy of physiological processes which are a necessary and vital part of the *Tantra Sadhana*. In the higher cerebral processes, the Absolute unites with the serpent-power, rising through the nerve of *Susumna* that lies between *Ida* and *Pingala*. *Ida* and *Pingala* correspond to attraction and repulsion, *raga* and *dwesa*, the two magnetic forces in the world. Man represents the power of repulsion ; and Woman, the power of attraction. It is called the principle of polarity. S. Laing in his book, *Modern Zoroastrian*, has said, "In all cases a positive implies a negative ; in all, like repels like and attracts unlike. Conversely, as polarity produces definite structure, so definite structure everywhere implies polarity. The same principle prevails throughout the organic world or world of life, and especially throughout its highest manifestation in human life and character, and in the highest products of its evolution,—in societies, religions, and philosophies. *Ida* is the female principle, and *Pingala* is the male principle, and *Susumna,* the path of the serpent-power, is the neuter. *Susumna,* therefore, is analogous to *Purushottam,* which is neither *Kshara* nor *Akshara,* in the language of the *Gita.* By independent efforts, the *Sadhaka* cannot bring about the functioning of this serpent-power through the *Susumna,* just as the young learners cannot be trusted merely with books. Though books are repositories of knowledge and sometimes in themselves self-sufficient wholes, they do not preclude external help. Those who want to do away with teachers in the field of spiritual culture, are in the position of the old Irish woman in the story, who did not see why people should speak so highly of the sun and prefer it to the moon, because the sun appears when there is light enough! To say that the Guru is a splendid superfluity in the divine economy of things, is to say with the old woman that the sun is not needed, because it appears, not when there is a stygian darkness, but light enough!

But there are Gurus and Gurus. Vijaykrishna was not in search of an ordinary teacher, but an "Incarnate Teacher", which phrase, however, he did not understand at that time. Though not a believer in God confining Himself in the human body, Vijaykrishna was panting for such a Guru as would be able to lead him up the ladder of perfection. A Guru of this kind is Godsend ; he is a mighty red-hot furnace with leaping flames of fire, a portion of that Cosmic Joy whose revelation Beethoven and Schiller have sung in the West. Such a Guru can be had, only when divine grace has been showered upon the aspirant whose yearning has been sufficiently proved to be a real thirst of the soul, and not a mere ebullition of humour that lives for a day or for an hour. In the modern world, that Panurges-like is busy making money, and where "getting and spending, we lay waste our powers" at the counter, real seekers of religion are rare, very rare. The real seeker of religion must have a pure heart, capable of holding the image of God ; he must be a suitable receiver, capable of reproducing, as the same piece of music, a tune broadcast into space and vibrating through the ether. In religion, nothing is more requisite than a pure heart. "The pure heart of him who has affirmed himself in full consciousness, is transformed into a mental sky with its own sun, moon, and stars." Such a pure heart becomes a receptacle of the inconceivable God through the mysterious vision and exaltation of mind. And Vijaykrishna was as pure and lovely as a lily. To him the attainment of religion was the very justification for his existence, and Vivekananda truly says that "when the power that attracts the light of religion in the receiving soul is full and strong, the power which answers to that attraction and sends in light, does come as a matter of course." But those who "stand on the outward fringe of the horizon of Religion", drop off on the way.

Trailanga Swami truly said that Vijaykrishna's real Guru was actually weeping for him, awaiting the day, when he would have him and throw open before him the gate to the house of God for him to see there the idol of the *sanctum sanctorum* of his heart. To the real Guru, his disciple is but the temple of his worshipped. If the worshipper finds that the temple has become unclean, and the regular service is in any way neglected, he is deeply mortified at heart. The Guru does not accuse the disciple but accuses his own self, if he ever finds his disciple not enjoying a healthy spiritual life. The fortunate few that sit at the feet of such a Guru, are men whom God, Whose working is inscrutable, has, out of His infinite mercy, saved from the grinding wheel of the universe by the award of *Nirvana-Mukti* or the termination of the cycle of births and deaths and the participation of the redeemed soul in the Highest Reason. For a time the Guru, who is Divine Grace in flesh, purges them in the fiery furnace of tribulation, so that they may come out pure and strong and as tempered as steel. The Guru so much identifies himself with his beloved followers that their tears of sorrow and the smiles of joy become his own. Their smiles light his face, their tears depress him. But he knows that alchemy whereby he can effect the romancing of sorrow and make it as welcome to them as happiness. Happiness and sorrow, he makes them understand, are the facets of the same gem—God's mercy towards men. Sufferings are necessary for a black soul to be washed white, and the felicity that comes at intervals like the smiling moon, peeping through the clouds, is a sauce to life, and both are to be accepted in the same mood as the benign dispensation of Providence with which none can quarrel but to his own cost.

One of the qualifications of the real Guru is that he possesses what is called "historic consciousness." It gives him the universal vision and not a mere fragmentary glimpse. Sister Nivedita thus spoke of Swami Vivekananda in *The Master As I Saw Him,* "It would seem sometimes as if the Swami lived and had his very being in the sense of his country's past. His historic consciousness was extraordinarily developed." A vast deal of ready scriptural knowledge and mythological lore, is not a pre-requisite to one's being a Guru. Like the wiser man of the two in Ramakrishna's story, who did not bother to count the myriad leaves of the tree in a garden but ate only its fruit, he takes into himself only the beautiful lessons, the gems of truths ensconced in the leviathan pile of the *Shastras*. And these lessons are not flashy distilled things, in the words of Francis Bacon, but the very essence of spirituality, the perfect white that alone can claim to replace all the colours of the rainbow, since it contains them all. He hears the symphony in the polyphony. As Heraclitus says, "From discords (weave) the most beautiful harmony." Although the universe, in the nature of things, is a polyphony, under the master-hand of the great orchist a splendid symphony is evolved out of the keyboard. And only a trained ear enjoys the concert, singing of God the Father and Man the Brother, while each musician hears but the sound of his own instrument! "He sees himself in all and all in himself." The *Sadhaka* ever needs such a Guru as the mediator between the seen and the unseen. Lucy learning humanity from the willow and sublimity from the grand moving masses of clouds in the heavens, sitting in the lap of Nature which is both law and impulse, and "sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything"—may sound very well as poetical figures, but unless we have "a heart that watches and receives", unless the lotus of our heart becomes full-blown by the touch of the soft moon-beam of *Tattva-jnan*, radiating from the Guru (to use a classic metaphor), even these natural never-failing teachers are of no help to us. The Mystic Quest in the external Nature may indeed lead us, in rare moments of illumined consciousness, to see, like Henry Vaughan, on a cloudless luminous night, for the Eternity like "A great Ring of pure and endless light," and this Mystic quest is the quest most natural to our spirit, for, as Augustine said, He "made us for Himself, our hearts are unquiet until they rest in Him." Yet "those whom God has honoured by making them His spokesmen," must aid us. When the need for God is felt intensely in the innermost chamber of our being, we must approach, for the proper vista, those whom God has initiated into the mysteries of His kingdom. *Non amnia possumus omnes*. "We cannot for the most part find God unaided. He has spoken to the prophets, not to us." "God gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers."

Therefore the Master was out for his Guru, his *Missi Dominici*.

CHAPTER XII

THE MEETING WITH THE 'MISSI DOMINICI'

An earnest seeker of religion is in the position of a great artist like Shakespeare or Sophocles, of whom Matthew Arnold said that he saw life steadily and saw it whole. Only the founder of a new faith or of an order binds himself to a community; but the truly ardent seeker of the Truth has his respects for all persons, all things, and all ideas. As his religion is the very essence of liberalism, he flings open the windows of his heart—he takes a long backward stride to the past, he awakes his mind to the present, and he opens himself to the infinite future. He would not be initiated into the cult of exclusivism and say, "Thus far and no farther." Like the true literary artist, he is not "one of the greatest thinkers charged with a pregnant message to his generation." The moment a literary artist suffers from a Messianic mania and turns into a hawker of sociological liver-pills, he at once becomes a dead force. Homer saw the world and its ways "smiting the while his blooming lyre." Similarly a God-centric man like Vijaykrishna had never his precepts catering for a community, but he maintained the depths of his beautiful dream of love and bliss, being of all communities and yet not of them.

When we remember this we can at once see that Vijaykrishna joined the *Sahajiyas* not indeed to pigeon-hole himself as a *Sahajiya*, but to take into himself any truths he might find among them. The *Sahajiyas* are a curious mixture of latter day Buddhism and some elements of Chaitanyaism. During the Brahmanic renaissance, the *Mahayanists* retired to Nepal and other Buddhist strongholds in the Himalayas, but the dregs and scum of that monkish order were left behind ; they embraced a perverted form of Vaishnavism and took the name of the *Sahajiyas*. The feeble remnants of Buddhism survived not only among the *Sahajiyas* but also among the *Sufis*, and they may be detected even in the rituals of the Christian Church. Some scholars opine that the Radha-Krishna cult in its perversion was introduced into the *Tantriks*, both Hindu and Buddhist, before Sree Chaitanya had purged it of its grosser features in the fifteenth century. Vaishnavism and Buddhism thus formed an unnatural and unwholesome mixture, and it was neither fish nor flesh. The result was the *Sahajiyas*, who felt the need for exclusivism so much that, despite the universal character of their order, a Buddhistic vestige, they kept themselves secluded with their esoteric language, called the *Sandhya Bhasa* and rather out-of-the-way manners. The *Sahajiyas* like the *Tantriks* passed through a process of *Yogic Sadhana* to acquire some psychic and occult powers, and they put a premium upon the regulation of the breath for the training of their body. It is interesting to enquire why Vijaykrishna, who had tolerance for all sects, joined the *Sahajiyas*, and not the other religious societies. The special attraction that Vijaykrishna might have towards the *Sahajiyas*, was that they broke through the trammels of caste and the zenana, which established a spiritual affinity between them and the Brahmo Samaj. Moreover, the *Sahajiya* sect had a link with Chaitanyaism and, at the same time, had none of that sectarian outlook that characterizes hidebound religious societies in our country.

The *Sahajiyas* comprised the *Kartabhajas*, the *Bauls*, the *Darveshis,* the *Kishori-Bhajas,* with each of which Vijaykrishna came in touch. We hear so much of the *Kartabhaja* leader Aul Chand, later called Baba Aul, when after many wanderings and continuous exercises, he came to a place called Bejra in 1715 and preached to many people, who bowed to his flag and accepted his discipleship. In his honour, was composed a song beginning with "Whence has come this man with a strange cast of mind?" The *Kartabhajas* had devotion to truth, and they also had mystic powers and an emotionalism not perhaps morbid ; but strict purity of morals was very often at a discount among them. The other sect, the *Bauls,* also claimed kinship with the Vaishnavites, although they were unmistakably the *Mahayanists*. The Buddhistic features stood out prominently in them, as did more or less in the other sects, comprised under the name of the *Sahajiyas*. Their songs are full of naive and simple charm, but they are less enjoyable than the sunny stream of bliss and felicity in the Vaishnavite songs and lyrics. It is because the *Bauls* were introspective about the awakening of the infinite in man and also death, decay, and transitoriness. The *Bauls* regarded their body as a macrocosm in miniature, an epitome of the universe, the world in an embryonic state, and hence their songs have a speculative element, not allowed much room in the melting music of the Vaishnavas. The Vaishnavite songs and lyrics are always without the sombre speculative element, and yet they do not move in the channel of sensuousness but have always taken an idealistic course. The Vaishnavic ideal cannot be contentless and non-conceptual like the Buddhist. The theory of *Sunyamurti* of the *Bauls* was analogous to the "Void" of the *Mahayanists*. The other section, and the *Kishori-Bhajas,* presented in their woman-worship a very debased form of the pure Radha-Krishna cult ; and this disgusted Vijaykrishna most, and he soon discovered what wine-drop, spilled by them, had spoilt the *Radha-prema-sudha-sindhu* (or the ocean of the nector of the love of Sree Radha,)—what poison worked in the sap of the whole tree. The exotic air was too uneasy for him, and he came speedily out.

The universal outook of these sects, their non-recognition of any image-worship, and the existence of a semblance of Chaitanyaism in all of them which Vijaykrishna very recently had appreciated in warm terms, might have drawn him there ; but he did not get what he sought so very importunately. It was really praiseworthy that these sects could abjure caste so easily, to shake whose foundations in the Hindu society the enlightened Brahmo Samaj had to do so much. Religion being the very breath of his being, Vijaykrishna could have no utilitarian consideration, which many of his Brahmo brethren had, but he ever was thinking of God's menagerie where you cannot go out with a cage in your hand and shut up whatever you like. The derision in which they held the image-worship of the Hindus, was also commendable, for many of those idolators had no realization of the unmanifest *Brahman* and, therefore, could never rise to that plane of psychic consciousness in which the external symbol loses all externality and becomes the truth in the initiate's realm of psyche. Their idols were gods, their ideals were not worshipped in their idols as gods.

It was not only these that won Vijaykrishna's admiration; the cult of the Guru prevalent among them might also have constituted another attractive feature for him. But what pained him most during this brief association with them, was their decayed morals—an evil which totally eclipsed their higher features. The uttermost neglect of the wholesome rules of conduct characterized latter-day Buddhism, but during the Brahmanical renaissance, physical and moral purity became the *sine qua non* of religion. The Brahmos of the time were also remarkable for their puritanic taste and unstained morals. In their neglect of the rules of conduct, the *Sahajiyas* betrayed themselves as latter-day Buddhists. How strict Chaitanya was in the matter of sexual purity, was evident from his rejection of the junior Haridas. Of course, from the vast *Sahajiya* literature, we can pick up some exceptional instances in which the *Sadhaka* realized the idealized form of sexual love which was really the goal of the *Sahajiyas*. Vijaykrishna also did not like the practice of breath-control for the attainment of higher spiritual culture, for he knew that it might have had its necessity for the harmonization of the internal vital processes of the *Sadhaka* and therefore, as one of the preconditions for spiritual realization, but to give it such a high value would be mistaking the crust for the kernel.

Vijaykrishna left the *Sahajiyas* but did not know where to go. "The pain of God" increased more and more ; and fast and vigil could not weary him. He journeyed on to Gaya with his Brahmo friend, Sasi Bhusan Basu. On the way he stopped at Madhupur. There he preached Brahmoism. God filled Vijaykrishna so much that, in course of his preachings, he was beside himself every now and then, and for hours he was wrapped in meditation, altogether forgetting the surroundings. From Madhupur he came direct to Gaya, where in the Akashganga Hills, he was cordially received by

Raghubardas Babaji. Vijaykrishna felt very happy at Gaya. It was the same Gaya, which had magically transmuted the mind of Nimai even on his first visit, so that he said to his fellow-pilgrims:—"I will no more return home. The Brinda-grove is my home. Thither will I go to seek my Krishna, my darling." Sasi Babu could never forget, in life, the wonderfully sweet song Vijaykrishna sang in the Akashganga Hills, sounding his little cymbals one fine morning, when the sun was throwing its gaudy purple rays over the hills and a little stream near by was crooning a lullaby. Then he passed into a reverie. Such a reverie comes when there is absorptive concentration on the Divine, and there is the casting-off of the sense-impressions that overlay the soul. During this supra-conscious state, when his spirit was enjoying the sentiment of its own life with the Divine, a serpent was found to coil itself round his thigh, but being impregnated with a divine radiance, emanating from a great devotee immersed in prayer, the serpent would not hurt him.

Sasi Babu felt a new life during the few days he stayed with his friend. One day, in course of a walk, Vijaykrishna showed Sasi Babu a place where, in his fine frenzy, Chaitanya is said to have exclaimed, "O My Soul, O My Krishna, where hast thou fled?" This is possible only to the purest *Bhakti* which is, according to Valadev Vidyabhusan, both *nimesha* and *unmesha,* signifying separation and union, in contradistinction to *Jnanam* which is only *nirnimesha ikshana*. Another day, Vijaykrishna took Sasi Babu to Bodh-Gaya, where the Buddha had had his supreme realization of the need for desirelessness as the final step to the conceptual state of *Nirvana,* and his disciples had been enjoined to grasp the truth he had arrived at as the only reality beneath and above, in and out, in this fleeting world of death, decay, and transitoriness, and to grasp it with the zeal of a sinking man. Vijaykrishna went into an ecstasy in his praise of the Buddha as a great Indian hero of universal love.

Vijaykrishna now asked Sasi Babu to go back to Calcutta, as he himself was unwilling to return to the scene of his former activities. Perhaps, while he was breathing the free air of Gaya, there were wide awake in his mind the selfishness and jealousies of some of the Brahmo brethren, so long ill-concealed by the veneer of the brotherhood of man but now appearing at a gallop. With tears in his eyes, Sasi Babu had to retrace his steps back to Calcutta.

Vijaykrishna now wandered alone. One day in his solitary ramblings, he came to a place where the memories of his pre-existence suddenly crowded upon his mind. This flash of illumination was like the lightning that lits up a whole world. On the bark of a banyan tree were inscribed the words, "Om Ram", and Vijaykrishna at once knew that it was his handiwork. Pre-existence and re-incarnation go by the name of palingenesis, and to support this, psycho-analysists have always brought in their general conception of Divine Creative Power and the analogy between physiological and biological evolution. The theory of the plurality of the lives of each individual self is indeed very old. In the modern world also, it is only by the theory of palingenesis that we can give the rationale of the existence of higher psychological types within the same biological species, since, true to the spirit of science, we are not prepared to believe in the universe as a fortuitous concourse of accidents and in God intervening in the human affairs by a sudden supernatural revelation. When, from the reports of the modern psychical researches, we know that an ordinary soul can recollect the pre-existence, it is no wonder that, at the very sight of a house, then a heap of ruins, Vijaykrishna should distinctly remember where he had lived and slept with two other *Sannyasins* in his previous birth.

Vijaykrishna derived great spiritual pleasure from the association of the *Sannyasins* at Gaya, but no draught could completely slake his thirst. At last, when his anguish rose to a climax, the long-awaited *Guru* appeared. One day Vijaykrishna met on a hill-top a mighty *Yogin* whose entire frame was iridiscent with an invigorating effulgence. He was no other than Brahmananda Paramahamsaji. He had hailed from the Manas Lake in the Himalayas to initiate his beloved disciple into *Yoga-Sadhana*. "I am He Whom thou seekest!" Even in his first meeting, a great spiritual light entered Vijaykrishna's soul. The following morning Vijaykrishna went hot-foot to him, and Paramahamsaji lovingly clapsed him and at once initiated him. After the initiation, Vijaykrishna sank into a *Samadhi* which lasted for eleven days. The silent deeps of his subconscious life were stirred, the *Sattva* element, so predominant in him, became purified to the uttermost by a mere touch of the *Missi Dominici*. It was not "Hysteria Magna with a high temperature." It was the first onslaught of light upon the receiving system.

Brahmananda Paramahamsaji was a mighty *Yogin*, and such *Yogins* are very rare phenomena even in India, the land of *Yoga*. The wonderful power of such *Yogins* can bring about the total subversion of the universe, if they only take it into their heads to make use of it in that direction. This dynamic spirituality is as fearsome, as some of the wildest forces of Nature, and Modern Science, despite its startling achievements, cannot explain how the Indian *Yogins* can separate their soul from their body and can attain the highest psychological life, in which the soul, a living entity, indissoluble, unchangeable, and immutable, different from and independent of the body it inhabits, can accomplish feats which are natural to it, but which the material world that knows not the soul and its working, would wonder at. Human personality with its spiritual body can cover thousands of miles within an inconceivably brief space of time, and the great figures associated with Modern Psychical Research, *e.g.* Balfour, Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Frederic Myers, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, after a long and patient investigation have obtained only partial glimpse of this great truth, which is illustrated in the lives of these stupendous towers of spiritual strength.

It was in the spiritual body that Paramahamsaji appeared to Vijaykrishna, and he also exhibited to his beloved disciple some *Yogic* feats, which are found described by Patanjali, the great writer on *Yoga* of about 150 B.C. It is not solely by our personal efforts that we can arrive at a perception of the highest Truth. Supra-consciousness dawns in its entirety only on those who are like the twelve disciples with whom Christ chose to dine at the Last Supper. Yet, as in *Kathaka,* Chapter III, the *Sadhaka* has to keep his eye fixed on the Reality, through stern endeavour and concentration, by holding the mind in check, as a horseman reins the horse. He has to withdraw his mind from the flood of ego-phantoms, and rivet it on the only Existent Infinite Self by gaining a mastery over his obtuseness and embarking upon a career of total renunciation, which is the dismissal of the world by direct negation. His path is, therefore, poles asunder from that of the *Bhakta* who proceeds by positive affirmation, and in his case, there is no strained resolution but an emotional approach towards the Beautiful, and in his supra-sensuous sense, Nature is denaturlised, Matter is dematerialised, and the Æsthetic becomes the expression of the spirit in a determinate form. The tide of love sweeps the devotee down the stream to where the Beloved is ; the senses follow the lead of the one dominant passion like the children, following the pied piper of Hamelin in Goethe's story. The renunciation comes as a necessary corollary of this absorption of Love in the One. It is very difficult even on the part of scholars who have dedicated themselves to academic research for years and years to ascertain the date of Patanjali exactly ; but if we identify him with the other Patanjali, the author of the great commentary (*Mahabhasya*) on Panini's grammer, he may be said to have lived in 150 B.C. The growth of *Yoga* as Philosophy and Religion may, however, be traced back to 700 or 800 B.C. Therefore, when we hear that Paramahamsaji, before the wondering eyes of Vijaykrishna, detached his soul from his mortal coil and entered a dead body lying in the neighbourhood, we are at once reminded of Vipula, the disciple of Devasharma, who entered, by the powers of *Yoga,* into the body of the sage's wife, Ruchi, and controlled her speech and inhibited her movements from within, in the presence of the heaven-god Indra, who, enamoured of her dazzling beauty, had developed an all-engaging passion for her. When Indra appeared during the absence of Devasharma, Ruchi, who had already reciprocated his passion, desired very much to greet him, but she could not bring herself to do so, as she felt the pull from within. Vipula's inanimate body was lying near, and when Indra found the lady cold and sedate, he understood everything and fearfully went away. The *Yogin* knows the self alone to be a separate and independent entity, the vital matter ; the sensory and concrete mentality being things super-imposed or extraneous determinations, that must be shaken off at once through silent endeavour, if the *Sadhaka* is to realize the identity of his immutable and unchangeable self with the universal self and plunge into the "Wisdom and Spirit" "as the sun-burnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore", in the words of Hazlitt. When this transcendent self is realized, the body no longer stands as a fetter, and the soul can issue out of the body and enter into it at will, just as we put on a cloth and then cast it off.

When the *Yogin* sinks into *Nirvikalpa Samadhi,* the vital functioning of the heart stops, and naturally the breath ceases, and the body is petrified. Before *Nirvikalpa Samadhi,* comes *Savikalpa Samadhi*. The *Samadhi* is a conjugation of the *Jibatma* with the *Paramatma,* the Soul with the Oversoul. After sublimation, comes submergence. There is an intoxicating silence, there are no more the ego-phantoms, only the conscious Ego throbs like the heavy tick of a clock in a silent room at dead of night. This brings about the convergence of all the streams of thought into the Ocean of the Conscious Being, like the tributaries discharging themselves into the confluent Ganges. Wordsworth describes this highest kind of *Yoga* in *Tintern Abbey,* which is a record of the spiritual history of the poet's soul.

. . . . that blessed mood
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world
Is tightened:—that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on
Until the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep in body
And become a living soul.

After the *Samadhi*, the *Yogin* has, however, to return to the envelope of his differentiated ego, but since the mind has been destroyed, the ultimate principle of consciousness, that is, the spirit, reigns supreme, and there is no possibility of the mind usurping the place of the spirit, and of obscuring "our life's star" that "cometh from afar."

After *Pralaya* or the potential state of the universe for timeless times and countless æons, the *Brahman* awoke suddenly from the state of universal homogeneity and saw Nothingness, and being forgetful of self, performed an act of self-negation or sacrifice which, in Christianity, is called Logos or the Christ principle. The first state was 'glacing round' (*ikshati*), the second stage is the 'visioning' stage (*pasyanti*), according to the non-Vedic schools of tradition. This 'Mighty Vision' of the universe which the *Atman* called out of nothingness and is akin to *our* thought-experience of objectivity after sleep, however, disappeared suddenly due to the working of the negating energy, and the *Atman* so long surveying the *Achetypal* was now turned into the Experiencer of the Vision and, while chasing it, caught only its fragmentary glimpses, the *Atman* now becoming self-limiting Self. When we remember all this happening to the *Atman* in limitation, we can understand why the human soul also under the bondage of the Concrete Mentality, cannot fully receive the sensation-generals, and it is only when the mind is smashed to pieces, which is the *summum bonum* of *Yoga* discipline, that the Self as soul no longer labours in space-time frame and attains *Moksha* or salvation. The conscious and sub-conscious flow of the mind is stopped, when absolute indifference to worldly things and worldly pleasures is achieved. The world is indeed unreal, but this unreality has gained a *Vyavaharika Satta ;* and the glass that constitutes our visual organ, has the image of everything cast on it as inverted, and there has been among us no Bernard Shaw with his "unnaturally natural vision" (to quote his own words) to point out to us that it is only an inverted image. But the eye turns inwards, when there is nothing to fascinate us in the world external. *Vairagya* cannot be achieved without a high standard of moral elevation, and, therefore, a lofty plane of moral life is pre-requisite to *Yoga* discipline. Emphasis is here laid not only on negative moral virtues, but also on positive virtues. The attainment of moral perfection helps in the control of the mind, and for physical control, it is necessary to keep the body in a state of suspended animation by the regulation of the respiratory processes. Senior Haridas is said to have remained buried under ground for more than a month, and when his apparently inanimate body was brought out, it again came back to life. Among the bodily disciplines, can also be included the various sitting postures favourable to keeping the body sound and flexible, and the internal automatic washings. The goal of *Yoga* mysticism is *Prajna,* analogous to *Prajnanam* in Upanishadic mysticism, and this is achieved, when the object of concentration ceases to be the object, stripped of name and form, and the mind becomes the object itself, and the spirit alone shines with the destruction of the mind.

Brahmananda Paramahamsaji, by virtue of his *Yogic* powers, acquired this non-intuitional knowledge. Vijaykrishna saw his Guru, magnifying the dimensions of his body into terrible proportions and immediately after, reducing it to an ion. That is, almost in the same breath, from a being of stupendous magnitude, he became almost an entity without magnitude. Next, he instructed his great disciple in the *Sadhana* according to *Jnanam, Yoga,* and *Bhakti*. Then he could be seen no more.

Vijaykrishna now gave his nights and days to *Sadhana,* for he was one of those the close secret of whose success, is not "that of the lilies of the field, arrayed in glory, who toil not, neither do they spin." He forgot everything, drinking all the while the nectar of the name of God. His peals of laughter reverberated in the distant hills, and the tears that streamed from his eyes, watered his cavern, as the different shades of feeling passed over his mind. The repetition of the Lord's name elicits such feelings, as "the name is the nearest expressive symbol of the experience of the Divine." The name is "the vibrational symbol of the Divine", as the concretised or materialised expression of the Divine is the image the Hindus worship in their temples. "The vibrations embodied in the name, are the very first materialised expressions of the purely spiritual and ideal experience. It is for this reason that there exists a very intimate relation between sound and feeling, and that, in most forms of *Sadhana,* rhythmic sound (*mantra* or *nama*) is prescribed in order to elicit the feeling and the idea, of which the *mantra* or the *nama* is the expression." As his mind was a pure mirror, bearing in its bosom the reflection of the Divine, Vijaykrishna at this time was immersed in devout feeling ; and this pure feeling, as distinguished from ethical theism, and absolute idealism, is given a very high place in the scale of higher discipline by all mystical divines including Schleiermacher, the founder of romanticism in theology, the man who attacked the intellectual system of Hegel. The 'intellectual love of God', to quote the phrase of Spinoza, is not the same as this flowering of mystical ecstasy, but rather repudiates it.

The trance over, Paramahamsaji appeared to Vijaykrishna for the second time and bade him go to Hariharananda Saraswati at Benares for taking the vow of a *Sannyasin*. Vijaykrishna went on foot from Gaya to Benares. After passing through the rituals prescribed by Swami Hariharananda, Vijaykrishna turned a *Sannyasin*, putting on the ochre robe and performing his own funeral service. He was honoured with the new name of Achyutananda Saraswati, according to the practice of the Indian *Sannyasins*. Truly was he named Achyutananda, for he had perennial delight only in following the path of God.

After this Vijaykrishna stayed at Vindhyachal, and though for a time things augured well, he soon had to face a dire situation. The streams of life within his heart became dry, so to say, and it seemed as though the Cyclopean crater of his heart was constantly fed with igneous substance. Something burned within him, sending up tongues of flame which nothing could quench. Paramahamsaji came for the third time, each time with a greater solicitude for the well-being of his beloved disciple. This is one of the most critical but necessary period in the life of the *Sadhaka*, for, after the suffocating heat of summer, when "the lizard with his shadow on the stone, rests like a shadow", and there is the death of Nature, so to say, come the sweetest and health-giving rains. In accordance with the advice of the Guru, Vijaykrishna went to Jwalamukhi and read two books—*Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and *Bichar-sagar*, as recommended by him. After this terrible spiritual experience for a brief while, Vijaykrishna had once more a robust mind with a robust optimism.

Vijaykrishna had now to return home. What a talk! How can a *Sannyasin*, on absolute renunciation of the world, return home! And yet Paramahamsaji insisted, and Vijaykraishna had to go back to the Samaj. "The solemn peaks but to the stars are known", and Vijaykrishna had to go down the peak to reach the level of humanity, not certainly to his own detriment, for he was the same man or rather the greater man, when he left the heights, like the Ganges, that lost not her purity, because she quitted the rocks, but won a greater degree of universal reverence for her selfless act of beneficence.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ABSTRACT THEISM SOUGHT TO BE PARTIALLY CONCRETISED

Vijaykrishna returned to the Samaj like a man lost in God with a heavenly glow playing about him, as the poet sang—

> When I returned from the Lyonesse
> With magic in my eyes.

He lived among his old friends and relatives and yet was not of them. If, prior to his initiation, the *Brahman,* the Self-shining One, gave him only a fragmentary vision of Himself, the fuller and more complete perception was now vouchsafed to him. Although the Brahmoic conception of God is that He is infinite and eternal and formless, "passing the flaming bounds of place and time", yet He can be known and His presence can be perceived by a mind attenuated and purified. Although the Brahmo Samaj protested against the ethnic, anthropomorphic, and finite conceptions of God, yet its religion was far removed from the belief of Agnostics like Herbert Spencer and Huxley, that God cannot be known, although He may have existed. "The Infinite is not a blank to the human intelligence." So even in the Brahmoism of Rammohun, there was room for the doctrine of Divine Grace, and this manifested itself either in the raising of the Finite to the Infinite or the descent of the Infinite to the Finite. Vijaykrishna awaited this divine mercy long and eagerly, and now that he perceived the Perfect Self, the incognizable and intangible Reality, God without form, all the sense-stimuli impinging upon his mind vanished, and everything in and about him acquired a new and unwonted meaning.

One of the distinguishing features of the life of Vijaykrishna at this time as before, was the singular emphasis laid on the operation of Divine Grace as the only thing capable of leading us to salvation. Vedantism holds that there can be no such thing as Divine Grace, and that this doctrine has been invented by some only to cover the supposed unbridgeable gulf between the finite *Jiva* and the infinite *Siva*. Brahmoism, although deriving its monotheistic creed from Vedantism, never accepted the Vedantic view of the apparent finitude of the individual. However much Vedantism might have denied the operation of Divine Grace in the intuitional spiritual experience, the dawning of the illumination, revealing the true character of the finite, was described by Sree Harsa as an act of Divine Grace. This doctrine of Grace is one of the very important characteristics of all theistic movements, and even Kashmir Saivism recognizes this doctrine by what they call *Sakti pata*. Looking hopefully forward to the grace of God is one of the determinants of pure devotion, and Vijaykrishna, who was a great *Bhakta* first and last, knew this patient waiting for Divine Mercy to be the life and soul of his religion. When Man ascends or God descends, the mystical opening is Grace and nothing but that. His life-energy being directly connected to divine energy by his Guru, the encumbrances that could not so long be altogether cast off by his very best independent efforts, were now gone,—there were no more any obstructions preventing his spirit from sending forth its pure white light. And herein we notice the necessity for accepting a Guru. Even Jesus Christ, who said, "I and my Father are one", had to be baptized by John the Baptist, and Chaitanya accepted the discipleship of Iswar Puri, although he made known to him the very *mantras* that he was to tell him. Although the Brahmos recognized no intercessor, their God being no extra-cosmic deity, no spiritual King Log, but One Transcendent and Immanent, Vijaykrishna's practical living experience told him that the doctrine of Mediation in the older theologies was no sign of uncompromising ignorance as was believed by many. However, he did not press forward this insufficiency in the Brahmo *Sadhan* with hot haste, as a lesser man would have done, but perhaps he patiently awaited Divine Mercy to open the eyes of his Brahmo brethren to this vital and all-important point.

The obstructions of the mind being gone for ever, there could not be for him any wrong identification, any mistaken notion, making him take the sheath for the sword. In the language of our ancient *Shastras*, the *Koshas* or sheaths of the Self were shattered. These coverings are of the same number as the grades or fields of vision of the universe are. The first involucrum of the Self is the nutrimental or material sheath, the second is the vital sheath, the third is the sensory, the fourth is the Ego-complex, the limited 'I', and the fifth is the *Mahat-Atman* (the spirit) *Asat* and *Avyakta*. No well-defined principle, no traditional method can help us to cast off these sheaths, which fall off of themselves as leaves do, when they are dry ; and we know that Sakya Muni had his perception of the All-luminous, *i.e.* he became the Buddha, only when he abjured the traditional method. One or two of these stages Vijaykrishna might have already passed, but now the last sheath was gone, and the realization of the Self which is self-knowing and not characterized by being known, was complete. This emergent evolution of the human soul (*Jivatma*) is like that of the *Atman* which, in the universal process (or *Brahmo-Vivarta*) having shed the life-blood on the 'cross of well-being', conceived the idea of returning to the original state of Supreme *Purusha* and thus planned the *lokas* of the universe, corresponding to the 'sheaths' of the Soul. With the destruction of the last beatific sheath was reached a very high stage of spirituality, and he now thought of certain new things for the attainment of the ultimate goal of the worship of *Brahman* as both personal and impersonal, qualified and unqualified, transcendent and immanent, unknown and yet not altogether unknown, perfectly holy without a tinge of sin, undifferentiated and representing Love and the Beatitude of never-ending and illimitable Bliss. Keshav also took to a new course with light from Ramakrishna's eye. God's will worked mysteriously, and while, under the tropical sky of India, the blooming flower of God-realizations of most of the Samajists were withering away, Vijaykrishna's spiritual rose impregnated the air with a perfume that intoxicated all that travelled in the paths of God.

Vijaykrishna now represented in his person the highest ideal of Brahmoism, so that Sivanath Shastri went so far as to remark, "There is no more need for preaching Brahmoism through speeches and prayers. The best way to preach Brahmoism would be to show Vijaykrishna to all." Abstractions were now to him "Alice's grin without face", and his *Brahmo-sadhan* became thoroughly practical. Men and women were now really seen by him as so many images of God, the same God, Who is indwelling in an atom and in the loftiest mountain. The Vedic view is that He is "smaller than the small" (*anoraniyan*) and "greater than the great" (*mahato mahiyan*) ; therefore, He is without magnitude. It is only things with magnitude that are perishable. Such things with their temporary lustre are like gossamer in the air, which a slight puff of wind blows away. The *Brahman,* Who is Pure Existence, Objectless Awareness, and Unalloyed Joy (*Satchidananda*), is the same to-day, to-morrow, and for ever. All this is abstract philosophy, and the philosophical background of Brahmoism is interesting enough, although practical mysticism is immensely more useful. "The person who is in some sense the fresh present day organ of the Life of God is just so far a practical mystic."

In the eighteenth century England, there was the rise of a new school of philosophy called Deism, and the Deists believed that the universe is a dull mechanical clockwork, a savage and unkempt condition, which is reformed into order by the corrective efforts of civilised man. So God is conceived as existing, if He at all does, outside the universe! And, although "Follow Nature" was the shibboleth of that pseudo-classic age in England, there could not, in that age, be any perception of the veil of the unseen in the visible of the world. When we stand on such a philosophic ground, life itself becomes reducible to mathematical formulæ, and everything in and about us assumes a dead level of order and uniformity, reft of all the aberrations and eccentricities of life. As a protest against this school of thought was the pantheistic doctrine of the Romanticists. Their ideas and interpretations of God immanent in Nature, everywhere impinged upon their poetry, and although Keats said that "philosophy clips an angel's wings", and William Watson said that "Song is not Truth nor Wisdom, but the rose upon Truth's lips", they always dealt in philosophical wares. To Plato natural beauty was the hierophant of the mysteries of the Heavenly kingdom, but what engaged Wordsworth was not the beauty of Nature, but the identity of God with Nature. To the Pantheists, there is no God apart from Nature, but although Wordsworth and Shelley are both Pantheists, there is a distinction between them in that Wordsworth read Nature as an open book in which there is no enigma, while Shelley traced the intermittent flashes of poetic beauty in Nature.

Now, the theistic religion of the Brhamo Samaj steers clear of both Deism and Pantheism. The God of the Brahmos is neither supra-mundane nor inconceivable outside the phenomenal universe. The cosmic drama is no illusion ; it is not blank nothingness, but everything is God, Whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere. When the theorists stopped, Vijaykrishna as a practical mystic was filled with artistic emotion at the sight of natural scenes, revealing God's sweet and serene smile. There could not be any room for pessimism in such a practical view of life and things, and hence he had a taste of *Brahmananda*. Smiles and tears, baking heat and freezing cold, planes and undulations, curves and straight-lines, ideas new-fangled and fossilised, discord and harmony—all were to him instinct with the divine essence, all material objects were the handiwork of the *Summus Artifex*.

In a lecture delivered at the Midnapore Brahmo samaj, in reply to the attacks of the Christian Missionaries on Brahmoism, Rajnarayan Basu observed,—"The beauty of His holiness should be ever present before the eye of the mind, as light that clasps heaven and earth in its lovely embrace is before that of the body." In

Vijaykrishna, this ideal realized itself. From the very first, he was as sensitive to the sense of sin, as the pupil of the eye is to a speck of dust ; and this consciousness of sin has a very high value in the economy of high spiritual life. Now that he attained to the plane of moral transcendence, God's holines perfumed his entire being, and naturally, as he returned from seclusion, he became the wonder and admiration of all. Ramakrishna Paramahamsaji at this time became so very fond of Vijaykrishna that once, while suffering from a severe ache in his limb, he desired to have Vijaykrishna by his side and said that his very presence would assuage his pain. A certain Brahmo said to Paramahamsaji, "You live the higher life of the spirit. The bodily organs are to you no fetters. Why then do you suffer pain?" With a sweet smile, Paramahamsaji at once replied, "You people cannot make me forget my pain. Call in Vijay. I forget myself when I see him." When he saw Vijaykrishna for the first time after the latter's return from Gaya, he greeted him with open arms and then, in his characteristic tone of transparent spontaneity and childlike simplicity, began a parable. Two *Sadhus* once came to a town. One of them stood in mute astonishment at the sight of the market, the houses, and the shops dealing in various goods. After a while, the one met the other. The latter said to the former, "I first tried to secure a resting-place, and having placed my bag and baggage there, came out to see the varied aspect of the town." This simple parable was highly suggestive to Vijaykrishna, and he embarked on a voyage of amusing discovery. At another time, out of the fulness of joy, he said, in a mood of radiant ecstasy, "My heartiest congratulations to you, Vijay. Blessed you are. The example you will give the world, living the life of an ideal *Sannyasin* in the midst of family life, will be a precious hegemony." Referring once to Muktakeshi Devi, the mother-in-law of Vijaykrishna, he said with sweet admonition, "How long will you feed on arid intellectualism? Take refuge in *Bhakti*. Make yourself blessed by obtaining *Bhakti* at the hands of your son-in-law." The terms of irony with which Ramakrishna sometimes spoke of the Samaj, were always untinged with scorn, but revelatory of a hilarious spirit, preferring certain things to others. Though no admirer of the rationalistic tendencies at work in the Samaj, Ramakrishna was conscious of the transcendent illumination in Vijaykrishna, and that is why he went into an ecstasy at the first sight of Vijaykrishna's God-filled appearance. Lokenath Brahmachari of Baradi also became one of the most ardent admirers of Vijaykrishna. When the orthodox Hindu society saw that Paramahamsa Ramakrishna and Lokenath Brahmachari loved and eulogised him so much, their former prejudice against him, roused by his creative liberalism melted away, and the same horizon that had once been darkened by fulminations and thunderings, now cleared up and became ablaze with many luminaries and satellites reflecting the light from the parent sun.

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What we have said so far of Vijaykrishna as a *Brahma-Jnanin*, goes to prove that he was a perfect Brahmo. All the high Brahmic ideals flowered in their full beauty in him. But, though agreeing with all Brahmos in the essentials of their religion, he had now, in certain points, a difference of opinion with most of the members of the Sadharan Samaj. Gradually things came to a focus. We know that, from the very first, Vijaykrishna had no tolerance for colourless rationalism, and even intuition regarded as revelation and as the very evidence of that revelation, seemed very insufficient for him. The scientific basis and setting of Brahmoism indeed made it the proper religion for to-day, and truly has it been remarked, "True science and true religion are twin sisters, and the separation of either from the other is sure to prove the death of both." But the sweetness that lies in hearing the "still small voice" of the Beloved and the great transition from Elias and Moses to the God of the New Testament, mark at once the superiority of the Gospel of Love to the Doctrine of Intuition. To Vijaykrishna, the Brahmo Samaj stood for a lofty spiritual edifice which, rising tier above tier, should ultimately ascend to the clouds of mystical union with the Beloved. But notes of dissent could be heard, and some oppositionists openly accused him of having spread unwholesome influences. There were people who even went so far as to call those influences "demoralising".

It is a matter of fact and experience that we always bring charges against mystical personalities whom we do not understand. Against Burke the people of his time brought the charge of inconsistency, although he was always just and patriotic to the innermost fibre. *The Reflections on the French Revolution* is ablaze with the luminous wisdom and glowing patriotism of the great sage and cannot be regarded as a negation of the wholesome principles he set forth in his earlier speeches. Those people who scandalised him, did not see that the lines of practical morality are not like the ideal lines of mathematics. Burke was ever the high-priest of order, and in this instance, he behaved like Priam, thinking only of Hector's body and driving the children away with a thousand curses. Unthinking and positively mediocre people, in a like manner, brought charges against our Master, though no criticisms could ruffle the pure sweet dignity and the gentle easy flow of his transparent sentiments. When misrepresented, a blatant egoist always cries his wares like "a barrel organ, groaning out its banal song", but this very picture of humility and forgiveness, this very personification of the Christ principle, did never proclaim his views, although he was all in the right. He meekly put them forward and then stopped.

Both Vijaykrishna and Keshav Chandra sought to broaden the structure of the eclectic spirituality of the Samaj. Keshav proclaimed the New Dispensation and Vijaykrishna introduced *Yoga Sadhana* into his spiritual culture, patiently watching its effects on the Samaj. It seemed to Vijaykrishna at this time that Brahmoism had become an orthodoxy in all but the name, since the Brahmo brethren were very suspicious of every new truth. Brahmoism, being a catholic religion, must always have an expansive character ; the frontiers of the Brahmic thought-region could not possibly be discovered and registered once and for all. The Brahmo brethren of the Sadharan Samaj were perhaps glad to see Vijaykrishna only as the perfect believer in their "Simple Theism", but the super-mystic, who would progress to "Vestiges of the Outerways" and thence to "The Courts of the Temple" to hear the "Voice of the Beloved", could not possibly stay long with the men on "The Hither side of the Portal." When they first saw him after the brief Olympic isolation with his saffron robe and shaved head, they at once suspected that his theism had changed in principle and purpose. In the words of Emerson, "the spirit orbed itself" in his countenance. And, for a time, they sat charmed, as his life-scene like a lovely garden of roses filled the sky and land with a sweet aroma ; but soon they took up a militant attitude, regarding his *Yoga Sadhana* as subversive of the solidarity of the church of modern theism, although there was absolutely nothing in it which could come in conflict with the higher theistic principles.

Keshav had also a similar fate. His Enthusiasm (Baptism of Fire), his Faith (The wonderful Arithmetic), his Inspiration (The Voice of God), his Belief in the Threefold Sentiment (Child, Madman, and Inebriate), which had already established his kinship with Vijaykrishna, now developed into the New Dispensation after the secession of the Sadharan Samaj. Although Vijaykrishna never joined the New Dispensation Church, yet there was no change of the love between him and Keshav. And we know that, while on his death-bed, Keshav was visited by his great friend. The silken tie of their old friendship even now bound the two hearts. Keshav said to Vijaykrishna, "I hear you have taken to a new track. I also have found one. After traversing long through many windings, I have at length found my way. If I come round, I shall call in you and tell you all about it." But death lay in wait for him, and in the words of Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar, his great biographer, the rose was "hidden away by the hand of the Great Reaper in the folds of the Eternal."

Like Vijaykrishna, Keshav also said that, if spiritual eclecticism had been the philosophy and faith of the Brahmo Samaj from 1850 onwards, there was absolutely no reason why a new truth realized in the inward heart of inspiration, should not be taken for a portion of cosmic Truth which is self-revealing but by degrees, there being no electric lift in spiritual progress. Both had worked for "joy in widest commonalty spread." If the Brahmo brethren rejected arbitrarily any new realization of truth which comes only to an enlightened soul, just as a pencil of light comes to a focus through a transparent lens, they at any rate could not shut out the new light, for they knew that the sublimated rationalism of the Samaj in which intellectualism and mysticism were in a happy equipoise, was intended to effect the grand harmony of faiths, of doctrines, of cultures, of scriptures, and of great men.

Keshav felt that one of the causes of the unpopularity of the Samaj was its failure to develop a national character. The metaphysical abstractions do not interest the multitude, and in order that the Brahmo religion might recommend itself to these people, it must have the national stamp impressed upon it. Since Brahmoism aims at universalism, it must be so developed that the nations of the East and the West, without mechanically imitating the religion of each other, will severally find in it their national heart. It must proclaim the universal anthem and sing the song of triumph and of oneness with all humanity. "Prayer and Inspiration", said Keshav, "are the two ends of the axis round which man's spiritual life revolves. They are only two sides of the same act." The Bharat Asram, which was designed by Keshav to be an apostolic organization, also depended for its management upon the voice of God, and this stirred up severe antagonism and even led to a law-suit. Keshav said that he walked by the light of Heaven and actually heard the voice of his Benign Father. "I have a voice which all true devotees can hear. It is the spirit's voice audible to the spirit's ear." P. C. Mozoomdar notes that "Keshav's daily devotions in the domestic sanctuary, were also a long series of the most earnest colloquy". When our prayer is the plain vernacular of the heart, and when we are able to throw our whole soul into it, and no barren and lifeless formulæ are interposed between the devotee and the Spirit by the pedestrian method of priests and theologians, we can indeed hear the voice of the Great Lover

> "Who forged that other influence,
> The heart of inward evidence
> By which he doubts against the senses."

God is neither the Unknowable of Herbert Spencer, nor the Unknown of Alfred Noyes. Away from the bounds of slow-footed and self-suspicious logic, our naked soul speaks in warm human accents, and there shines before our wondering vision "the traffic of Jacob's ladder pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross." In simple theism, God is conceived as unknown and yet not unknown, and it makes for an intellectual perception of Him. Keshav certainly wanted to transform the colourless creed of Brahmoism into "something rich and strange" with divine love for its very heart-beat. Polemics are fruitless, and to be logically satisfied that God exists, cannot be the Brahmic ideal. Under Keshav, God became a Living Deity, no longer merely an Intelligent Power. In the New Dispensation, certain ceremonies and litanies found a place, and though they were never made permanent or essential, they were regarded as useful. The *Arati* as a special Indian institution fascinated Keshav. How delightful was the scene when rows of lights were swung before the pulpit, illuminating the unseen face of the Beloved, visible only to the ardent eyes of the devotees, and the bugle sounded, the bells chimed, and the name of God was proclaimed aloud! The incense thickly scented the air, and as soon as the *Arati* was over, there arose thanksgiving and hallelujah to the Supreme Mother.

Keshav interpreted the five lights before the pulpit in so symbolical a manner that the whole thing was rendered subjective, and the New Dispensation, though full of objective realities, was in essence subjective. The divine face can be seen only by the devotee that has in him a five-fold light—purity, love, faith, *bhakti,* and conscience.

Like Keshav Vijaykrishna also introduced ceremonies as symbols ; new revelations obtruded themselves upon him, and he could not help them. How could Keshav, the sworn enemy of the least suspicion of idolatry, the man who held up as his ideal the Bombay Bishop, who knocked down a floral cross from a church, support those ceremonies, in warm terms of approval, in the fifth act of the drama? "Our times are in His hand Who saith, 'A whole I planned, youth shows but half'." The great Vijaykrishna, who fought against the last insignia of idolatry in the Adi Samaj, as a man fights for life in the waters, now accepted the cult of Guru, in spite of protests from all quarters and stuck to the truth with an enthusiasm that was radiant and never "sicklied over with a pale cast of thought." It was because the truth was not obtained second hand: he himself dug and struck gold. Conscious of the insufficiencies in the spiritual culture of the Samaj, he now initiated some people into *Yoga Sadhana,* in obedience to the direction of Paramahamsaji, his Guru. It was not the much-hated idolatry, for Vijaykrishna said that, if his disciples threw themselves at his feet, they paid respects not to his flesh, but to the divine in him. And the divinity latent or apparent in anybody or in anything, is worthy of our utmost veneration. There is no Guru but God, and none but God is entitled to an obeisance. And as he said this, he wept with the transparent sincerity of a child and took the dust of everybody's feet. If incessant prayer be the alpha and omega of the life of a Brahmo, *Yoga-Sadhana* is the proper thing for him. The Brahmo brethren were scenting idolatry in every nook and corner, but *Yoga Sadhana* involved not the least idolatry. It required a certain amount of private *Sadhana,* and the Brahmo mode of prayer had never been an altogether congregational worship.

The body and the mind are indissolubly blended together like matter and its quality, and therefore, physical purity presupposes mental purity and *vice versa.* It was for this that Vijaykrishna strictly enjoined upon his disciples not to eat refuse from the plates of others. As Vijaykrishna was in love with the Beautiful, he kept in his house the pictures of Sree Krishna and Sree Radha and every now and then fell before them lost in artistic emotion. Every morning and evening his house resounded with the sound of the typically Vaishnavic musical instruments, and he uttered the names of Maha Saraswaty, Kali, Durga, and Shiva. This made him an infinite romantic mystery to all around. In explanation, he said that, though the mere idol of Kali the Mother would not be respected by him, he could not refrain from prostrating himself before Her, if the idol revealed Herself unto him as the undifferentiated Absolute. If, in the words of Tolstoy, the Idea shone through matter, he caught sight of the beautiful face of God in the pictures of Sree Radha and Sree Krishna, though not as yet like the Vaishnavas, enjoying the Concrete Transcendental in Beauty (a criterion of which is concreteness) through the senses in the super-sensuous order. Moreover, the pictures of Sree Radha inspired him with the living fire of *Bhakti,* and this *Bhakti* worked in him unseen and yet with a dashing elan. Without it, no clue could be discovered by anybody to plucking the heart of Hamlet's mystery.

Charge after charge was brought against these two powerful progressive *Sadhakas*. In this the Brahmo Samaj only showed that it had allowed its faith and beliefs to grow hard and petrified. Vijaykrishna did not see why the Samaj, a universal church, should be so conservative as not to embrace a burning truth, a living certitude, and hold on tenaciously to its walls. If Truth is the soul of Religion, and Love the body, and Beauty the raiment, the more we have of them the better. Vijaykrishna was all love and kindness even for those that grossly misrepresented him and ostracised him, and to those that praised him, he bowed with Christ-like humility. His adversaries were, in his eyes, much superior to himself. Humility as a principle of life, in *The Imitation of Christ,* became incarnate in him. He had too humble a notion about himself to think that all should agree with him, and he really admired those that quarrelled with him and would not take him at his word. Advanced *Sadhana* will always yield to the *Sadhakas* a new basketful of flowers, plucked from the garden of God-realizations, and they will always be eager to decorate the old frame and replenish its beauty. Though the New Dispensation was a tremendously genuine thing, people cast upon it as much vituperation as they could and accused Keshav of having sought to transform Brahmoism into a narrow sectarian cult. Vijaykrishna had his own followers, and only if he willed, he could have set up a new church, but he would be the last person to do so, for that would mean further schism within the Samaj. The best course open to him was to leave the Samaj. His gospel was Love and Faith ; what he hated most was *odium theologicum*. If the developments of his faith and practice were not agreeable to them, why should he inflict himself upon them? He was for Brahmoism, and not for the Samaj. For him, the Samaj existed for Brahmoism, and not Brahmoism for the Samaj. Though the resignation of the great missionary had its immediate effect, the deep loss was more keenly felt in later times. And Sivanath Shastri wrote, "No words of mine can adequately express the singleness of mind with which Vijaykrishna sought religion; and it is a matter of deep, very deep regret that that hankering ultimately led him into new paths, and he had to resign his post as a missionary."

After the severance of his connection with the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Vijaykrishna was invited by the East Bengal Brahmo Samaj to accept the position of the minister. The Dacca Samaj, at this time, developed into a great spiritual power from the mere position of a minor provincial Samaj, and a wave of feeling swept over the whole of East Bengal, as Vijaykrishna came and took up the minister's work. In the years 1864 and 1865, Vijaykrishna had flooded the district with the torrents of feeling, gushing eternally from the depths of the unplumbed reservoir of his infinite being; and now that he re-appeared on the scene of his noble activities which the Dacca people could not forget and which could not be repaid in gold and silver, he became the gaze of all and the glowing focus of warm praise. At the time of the Kuch Behar Marriage agitation, the Dacca Samaj, which had already gained the dignified name of the East Bengal Brahmo Samaj, protested against Keshav Chandra and declared itself independent. It had a rapid growth, as it was backed by distinguished persons of saintly memory like Kalinarayan Gupta, the illustrious father of

Sir K. G. Gupta, the Indian Council Member, Nabakanta Chatterjee, Rajani Kanta Ghose, Dr. P. K. Roy and Dr. Atul Chandra Roy.

One morning during *Maghotsab* there was a huge gathering. The whole town was streaming towards the Samaj. The moving music and smiling pathos of Fikir Chand's elegies, brought to every speechless heart a message of tryst. All were purified in every pore of their being. For a time, they were transported to the evergreens of the *Brinda* forest with the freshness of tender grass beneath and the melting blue of the sky above, and they seemed to listen to the Song of the Flute, vibrating through the hushed air of the moonlit grove. At one corner of the hall was seated the Master, whose very sight was an indefinable delight to the bewildered crowd. Now he quivered and trembled in every cell of his being, and the next moment he was merged in an oceanic flood of joy and he laughed and wept and danced, keeping time to the crystal flow of the music. Suddenly he sprang up and ejaculated, "Lo! My Mother is come. Mother! . . . Mother! Hallelujah to my Mother!" And at once he flung himself down and writhed on the ground. Then he stood up and muttered some words for the Mother and again sank down. The Eternal Beauty and Love, the Mother, dancing Her sublime dance and hastening to the rescue of Her lost child in tears with a host of sages round about Her, now peopled his vision. Wave after wave of liquid love passed over him. There was a moment's thrilling silence, and then shouts filled the air and the floodgate of tears was opened up. What remained of him after this orgy of divine delirium, was a motionless body in suspended animation.

The wheel of time brought the day to a close.

Vijaykrishna got up the pulpit. The listening crowd expected a fiery speech that would rise into the air like a tongue of flame or would break upon the walls with the burning breath of a tropical gale. But the Master stood stockstill. He could not speak. The Infinite overwhelmed him. He was dissolving away in the bounding surge of *Bhakti*. It was not his lips but his personality that spoke. The 'Thou' within the 'I' called out to him to see, and there transfigured before his wondering vision the form of the Mother, the Invisible Living Person became visible. He could not contain his emotion: "Mother, Sweet Mother! art thou come? O Joy, ineffable, boundless, limitless joy! Thousands of sages are around Thee and are dancing. And known faces too! Mother, help Thy son, this helpless derelict. Thou art my only guide, my sole refuge, my only raft across the ocean of life. Wilt thou yet be remote? Come, draw near. O me! I deserve not a seat at Thy lotus feet. Art Thou yet calling me to Thy side? —Me, the sinner of sinners!" Then he fell down and was lost in *Samadhi*.

"Pride, like clouds of sunset, spreads a changing colour round thy head," sang Walter de la Mare, but pride could never come near the Master, and he feared it as the very Devil. It could never weave the garland of Illusion for him. On he advanced with the voice, "Fear not" ringing constantly in his spirit-ear. As the madness of love increased more and more, he called upon all to come and give the dust of their feet and kick the phantom of the ego out of him. It was the descent of Heaven on earth. "What is Heaven to a reasonable soul? Verily nought else but Jesus God." Babu Nagendranath Chatterjee, the Bengali biographer of Rammohun, said that nothing on earth could ever make him forget that heavenly scene in the East Bengal Samaj, in which Vijaykrishna, seated on the pulpit, was washing the feet of the Mother with hot tears of love and shouting, "Mother! . . . Mother!" The Mysterious Mother was the Word made Flesh, the Arch that spanned Heaven and Earth. Once at Dwarbhanga Vijaykrishna said, "Behold, my Mother is peeping through that flower", and was immediately lost in *Samadhi*, as a salt doll is lost in water, in Ramkrishna's phrase. By him, as by Keshav, the broken units, "the flashes and coruscations of an invisible unoriginate perfection" were unified into a radiant unity—the Mother.

At this time Vijaykrishna visited a host of places—Burdwan, Baidyanath, Dwarbhanga, Konnagar, Barisal, Madaripur, Rangpur, and Kamakhya. Everywhere he set all hearts ablaze and dived deep in the unplumbed depths of God's love. To him, Love became the measure of the Endless. The attribution of motherliness to God at once represented the *Brahman* as a loving Deity, Who is ever nourishing the helpless child with the milk of Love, no longer frowning upon sins and weaknesses like an angry and abysmal Taskmaster but winding him in Her outstretched arms, partial and forgiving. But She at times plays with Her child. With an arch-smile, lurking at the corner of Her lips and a mischievous twinkle of the eye, She holds the flying kite with the string of illusion, in the words of Ramprasad. The evolution of the idea of God from the Father and the Teacher to the Mother and the Lover, has been indicated, though casually, in the Narayaniya section of the *Mahabharata*. The law of progress applies not merely to Hinduism but also to Christianity, Judaism, and others. The God of the New Testament is an advance over Elias and Moses. "A change passes over the Jewish religion from fear to love, from power to wisdom, from the justice of God to the mercy of God ; . . . . from the fire, the earthquake, and the storm to the 'still small voice'." With the growth of the idea of the maternity of God, Love gained precedence over His other attributes in the religion of the Samaj. From the semi-Vedantic service of the early Samaj with the idea of God somewhere between that pair of antithetical creeds, Deism and Pantheism, to the present position—what an endless whirling sweep! The development was a lovely nosegay of all truths in all religions ; there was no more than intellectual outfit, no more strictly philosophic Dualism, nor even popular Dualism with its trifurcation of the machinery of creation —Nature, Mind, and God.

Vijaykrishna had soon to resign his minister's post in the East Bengal Samaj, as many of the Brahmos resented his ecstatic hypnosis and the supernaturalism of his faith. His sermons and speeches encompassed in their scope not merely the Brahmos but the whole vast humanity. They were palatable dishes of spiritual truths that could be served at all tables. The Mother was the God of the murderous, the impure, and the down-trodden, and hence the Brahmo religion began to lose its aristrocratic character. The Mother came to the repentant sinner, even as Christ appeared to a Mary Magdalene and the Buddha to an Ambapali. Vijaykrishna communed with the Mother, talked with Her, and lost himself in Her, while speaking from the pulpit ; and naturally his speeches lost their sharpness of edge, and the solid pageant dissolved itself in a vague trail of incoherence and shapelessness. In reply to the criticisms, Vijaykrishna said that Truth was his Mystic Quest, and he could not sacrifice his inner treasure to standardise and come into line with them.

On he must proceed, the dynamic spirituality of his heart urging him forward. He left the Samaj, for it became a necessity with him for coming to the palmary channels of grace in a direction which may be called the King's Secret for becoming the warden of The Courts of the Temple.

CHAPTER XIV

THE UNION OF THE INDIVIDUAL WITH THE UNIVERSAL

It has been said of a remarkable scientist that, when he saw his table, he saw only a mass of ions and electrons and wave-lengths, and not the familiar wooden table as seen by others. Likewise, the great *Sadhaka* sees the *Brahman* everywhere vibrating through everything in the universe, when he wakes up to his supra-conscious state. He lives and loves and has his being in the Infinite ; the *Brahman* is the life and unity of all things, and no radical negation is involved in this process of perceiving the Invisible Unit Existence. Next to seeing the Self as the soul of our souls, the life of our lives, is to realize the unity of our individual self with the Absolute Self. For, the intuitive perception of God, who is unknown and invisible, is not enough. Prayerfulness and worship may even fail to keep alive at all times our firm faith in Him ; the film of doubt may yet hover before our eyes ; for, up till now we are not cognizant of the relation, not natural but spiritual, between our individual self and the universal self. At a time when Absolute Monism preyed upon the mind of Vijaykrishna like an incubus, he heard an Ethereal voice asking him to pray. The same voice was heard by his bosom-friend Keshav—"Pray ! Pray !" . . . "Offer prayer ; thou shalt be saved ; thy character shall be pure, what thou wantest thou shalt get." And Brahmoism is nothing, if not the religion of prayer. But, in the onward march of the *Sadhaka,* he arrives at a point where even prayerfulness cannot give him the direct consciousness of God, and the spiritual presence of a living God does not become to him a static and permanent factor. Though the *Brahman* is a living and speaking presence everywhere in and about us, to us He is yet realized only at a rare and intermittent flash, "visiting this various world with inconstant wings". But when we are able to realize that our individual self is the same as the self of Nature, we stand face to face with God. With our self-realization, the direct consciousness of God deluges our entire being. We cannot then get out of the presence of God even if we wish to, just as we cannot get rid of our own shadow.

So, Vijaykrishna, after having severed his relations with the Samaj, passed on to the stage of *Yoga*—the realization of the unity of the soul with the oversoul. "In himself he now sees all things and beings, equally as he sees himself in all things and beings."

This *Yoga* is not the subjective *Yoga* of the Vedantists, for Brahmoism could never be Absolute Monism, though it had some historical relation to it. We learn, from Rajnarayan Basu's journal *Dasi,* that Brahmoism was at first called *Vedanta-pratipadya satya dharma,* and yet it was never Monism. This has been called Philosophic Dualism as distinguished from Popular Dualism. According to Absolute Monism, it is Illusion that prevents the individual from knowing and realizing that he himself is absolute knowledge ; and as soon as he succeeds in fighting this Illusion to a finis, he himself becomes the Supreme Self, for, the Fourth Principle or *Turiya Brahma* is one and indivisible. But here the individual self, though at one with the universal self, is distinct from it ; it recognises relative existence which Absolute Monism denies. The Theists of the Samaj as well as the Vedantists believe that the Universal Self is a timeless, spaceless Being. The Supreme Self or the Atman is Existence—Knowledge—Bliss (*ekam sat*), the only Reality in this fleeting and continually moving world (*jagat*), replete with things that are with magnitude and therefore liable to decay. But what the Brahmos do not believe is that the individual self freed from the toils of *Maya*, becomes the Supreme Self, above man, Nature, and God. Like the followers of Sree Chaitanya, they have simply horror of the theory of *Maya* as enunciated by Sankar. The Brahmo Samaj perhaps imbibed a spirit of opposition to the Illusion theory through the channel of Chaitanyaism.

According to the Theists, the individual self is, in essence, the same as the self of the universe, but the latter unlike the former is unspatial and above time. That does not make the only difference, for, the individual self is enclosed within the physical and the vital, while the universal self is *pancha-kosha-vilakshana*. Under the physical, come the *Continuum* (which forms, we may say, the back-ground and medium of physical phenomena in the universe) and the *paramanus* which, though considered as the ultimate indivisible particles of matter, are however split up into electrons and protons of modern physics. The *paramanus* are compared to the Solar system, inasmuch as the electrons in each *paramanu* revolve round its proton like the planets going round the sun. Then, there are the Vital, the Sense-powers, the Sensation-generals, the Concrete-Mentality, the Ego-complex, the Universal Ideation, and Nothingness. With all these, the self-limitation of the *Atman* or the process of the self being involved in objectivity is complete. As there are no changing Ego-complexes and mental states and no physical *Bhutas* for the Universal Self, which is full and undiminished and transcendent, even though, in the Vedic language, the *Atman* in bondage is but 'Plenum taken out of Plenum', the distinction between the Universal Self and the individual self is a constant factor. Our individual self, even when it comes into full light of knowledge, can never realize the all-comprehensive knowledge of God, its highest knowledge being but an infinitesimal portion of the Great Knowledge, that is God. The finite self is never merged in the Infinite, and the distinction is, therefore, real and not apparent.

In the state of dreamless sleep, the individual self lies in the bosom of the Universal Self, without there ever being a complete sublation of difference. This is the Theistic and therefore the Brahmic conception, and hence there is very little common ground between Brahmoism and Absolute Monism. As, in the society of to-day, we must watch the bureaucrat on the one side and the anarchist on the other, as we should be neither Marxists nor Tolstoyans, so the true Brahmo has shunned both popular Dualism and Absolute Monism. Hence, in the Philosophic Dualism of the Samaj, there is scope for the deepest feeling of Love and Reverence towards God. That is why, in Brahmoism, there could be such living realizations of the golden everlasting relationship between God and Man. And that is why Vijaykrishna, the *Bhakta* of *Bhaktas*, to whom worship was the very breath of his nostrils, as £. s. d. is of us, joined the Samaj, became its missionary, its minister, and spent himself, as it were, in its service. Had it not catered for the *Bhakti*-feeling in him, had not *Brahmo-dharma* been a *Bhakti-dharma*, though with an admixture of *Jnanam*, he would have none of it. He found in the Samaj a spacious ground for developing his almost mediæval belief in the efficacy of prayers like that of

Christabel in Coleridge's poem, and King Arthur in his last life-scene:—

> Wherefore, let thy voice
> Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
> For what are men better than sheep or goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
> Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
> For so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by golden chains about the feet of God.

And Vijaykrishna prayed not for any worldly gains, but because he believed that to pray is the only thing very natural to man. A spark of fire cannot forget the parent fire whence it emanates.

To the Sankarites, unity was opposed to difference, and they could not see how the individual self, though at one with the universal self, could not be different from Him, and they explained away both *swarvajna* and *alpajna* as *tatastha* attributes or illusory superimposition by postulating in God the power of producing Illusion which, though divine and therefore real, was never recognised by them as *paramarthika sakti*—a rock on which Absolute Monism has split. But to the theists, the individual has the same relation with the universal, as the body has with the soul. As the body is not identical with the soul, so the identity of the individual with the universal is an absurdity. All the *Bhakti* schools of India hold that the human soul, though of the same nature as the Infinite Soul, the self of the objective world, is different from it, although they differ in detail. *Bhakti* is impossible without such a notion.

So, this stage of Yoga, into which Vijaykrishna passed, was neither the Subjective Yoga, nor the *Astanga-*

Yoga of Patanjali, which does not emphasise the distinction between the finite and the infinite, for, in the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi,* the *Jibatma* is lost in the *Paramatma,* which as self-shining Self alone shines. The *Yoga*, as practised by Vijaykrishna at this time, is described by Lord Vasudeva in the *Gita,* when He says that He is the Soul of souls, the Self of the objective world, and Arjuna is called upon by Him to practise this *Yoga,* and hence he is addressed as the conqueror of *Tamas.*

The kinship between the human spirit and the universal spirit is like that between a unit energy and the vast store-house of universal energy, which might be the ether or something else. The individual has the same relation to the universal, as one of the many divisions of a single vital cell bears to the entire original cell. Or, the relation between the two is like that between the surface-consciousness and the sub-conscious in psychology. The sub-conscious is the very ground of the existence of the former, although the surface-consciousness apparently behaves as being independent of it. If the glamour of the unity of God and Man so overpowers us as to make us oblivious of our essential and irresolvable distinction from Him; any spiritual culture along the path of devotion is out of court, for such culture depends for its very existence on the pilgrim-soul's surrender to God. All talk about the progressiveness of the soul under God's care that is infinitely greater than that of the mother-bird for her young ones, which is proverbial, becomes cobweb and moonshine and sounds like the ingenious fabrications, arising out of the volatile dreams of the opium-eater. This is flinging one's fists in the face of God and is as much odious and damnable, as the theory of the pure materialist that our inner life is due to the 'grey matter' originating in the cerebral convolutions. It is because the individual self stands against the background of the universal self, and the All-aware Being is the ground of our individual conscious life and awareness, that the Infinite Spirit is the dearest of the dear to us. Otherwise, the physical vesture would have absorbed, at all stages of the life-functioning, the sub-conscious desire for it.

To Vijaykrishna, therefore, "it was a consummation devoutly to be wished", for, with the spontaneous overflow of the *Bhakti*-feeling in him so manifest in his Mysticism of Karma, he could now give himself up to the Being, Who is the source and substratum of life in Nature and Man. Nature was not conceived as separate entity, not extramental, but seeing her meant seeing God, and the correlation of Man and Nature with the Ultimate Being was realized both in unity and difference. To offer himself up to the feet of God with a sense of helpless dependence ("Cry,—clinging Heaven by the hems") was ever Vijaykrishna's perennial delight, and for this he submitted himself to this Yoga-discipline, which etymologically means 'yoke' or training oneself. And really, even this *Yoga-sadhana* was a training preparatory to *Lila-sadhan* for him. As soon as there is the realization that the *Atman* prompted by Love (*Anandam*) has performed a sacrifice of joy which is this universe, so that all things animate and inanimate, not excluding a marble pillar from which issued forth the Lord of Prahlada, are but part and parcel of the *Atman* in self-limitation, the *Sadhaka* treads upon the ground of *Lila*. The *Atman* has appeared in plurality for enjoying but Himself. For Vijaykrishna, this was the key that could "open the gate of joy". He at last came to his own after many wanderings, but he "came unwearied in that service" with warmer love—"rather say oh! with far deeper zeal of holier love".

That 'something' continues to exist after our physical death, is not disproved by the latest discoveries of science. And this 'something' we call the soul which pervades the entire being, and which nobody can 'locate'. Prof. James has said that brain does not produce thought, and if productive function were the only function, the soul would have perished with the body, but there is also permissive function. When we come to transmissive function, "Ignoramus, ignorabimus, is what most physiologists, in the words of one of their number, will say here". So we come to Human Personality which is the soul. The body, the aggregate of cells, is ever-changing and is rebuilding itself every three years (so the physiologists say) with the old particles being replaced by new ones. The ego-complexes and mental states are also ever-shifting, but there is one thing

> "Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality
> There is no fellow in the firmament."

This is the soul—the real man, so that, though everything is in a state of flux, we may say, "I am the same man, to-day, to-morrow, and for ever." This realization of the body and the soul being mutually exclusive is the first stage of *Yoga*. Apart from scientific and philosophic arguments, in our common experience, we find that the decaying body of a *Sadhaka* is ablaze with the fire of the soul like the silent splendour of an Indian sunset. The soul comes "trailing clouds of glory from God, Who is our Home". So the soul is the only abiding entity, the real 'I'. But this 'I' is not the local and temporal 'I', our little self but the Higher Self, the greater Ego, indissolubly bound up with and utterly dependent on, the ultimate

Reality. This greater Ego appears as "the Kingdom of Heaven" within us. At the time we see an object, our subjective self, which 'knows', realizes its unity with the objective self, which 'makes itself known'. In this union of subject-object, we see our ownself in another and another's self in us, and all the time the Universal Self is clung to and realized as, the background and medium of our life. The realization of the *Sadhaka* at this time is somewhat the same as Browning has described in his *Paracelsus*:—

> "Truth is within ourselves ; it takes no rise
> From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
> There is an inmost centre in us all,
> Where truth abides in fulness ; and around
> Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
> This perfect, clear perception—what is truth.
> A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
> Binds it, and makes all error. . . ."

Whence this height is reached, the soul is joined to the Self, and there is the *Samadhi* which Vijaykrishna at this time passed into so often. The ego-consciousness *i.e. Ahamkara,* disappears completely, and thus under this *Yoga,* the *Sadhaka* is properly moulded for comradeship and love-union with God in the eternal *Brindaban,* for none is given admission who has the least taint of self-consciousness. Sree Krishna vanished away with a suddenness that baffled all conjecture, the moment the ego-phantom just stole into the hearts of the *Gopis* like a serpent into a flower. So this *Yoga* on the one hand is complementary to *Brahma-Jnanam,* in so far as it gives the *Sadhaka* the direct consciousness of the *Brahman* "at once far off and near" as his inner self, the life of his life ; and on the other, is a sowing of the seeds broadcast into the soil for the splendid harvest of *Lilanubhuti* or the enjoyment of the Lord's feast of love and joy. After the four great experiences, *Salokya, Sarupya, Samipya* and *Sajujya,* the result of *Yoga,* comes Love, for 'Love is best'.

CHAPTER XV

THE PEACEFUL SUBURBAN RETREAT AT DACCA

For his *Sadhana* at this time, Vijaykrishna picked up a quiet nook in the suburbs of Dacca. This was jungly Gandaria, a sacred place, consecrated by the Mussalman Fakirs. For an appreciation of what it had been then, we must take a long backward stride and conjure up before our mind's eye a place like the world's end-tracks, away from the dirt and dusty drifts of city life. It had then none of those buildings it now contains, and an *Asram* situated in this very heart of Nature, naturally resembled the *Tapaban* of by-gone India, where the dark tall trees and orchard-tufts used to "connect the landscape with the quiet of the sky", where there were "the homely beauty of the good old cause", "pure religion breathing household laws", and life ran "glittering like a brook in the open-sunshine". To-day even in India, who can conceive of man by his "fearful innocence" like the Saint of Assisi, endearing himself to trees and beasts alike, moving about amidst hares and soft-eyed gazelles, sleeping under the vast open blue of the endless sky, and drinking of the crystal waters of the sacred river, pursuing God all the time as his be-all and end-all? There was a time when in this Gandaria Asram, the Master lived with his beloved disciples, and under his sparkling glance that dwelt on them so kindly, the budding flower of their God-realizations silently unfolded like the jasmine, and when the nectar of the Master's sweet voice and the spiritual perfume of his presence, gave salvation to trees and beasts alike. The reminiscences of the old *Asram* would weave for us illusions incompatible with the noise and dust of modern life. There was not the false glitter of aristocracy here ; all people, disciples or no disciples, were equally welcome ; the Master addressed them in the language, for which they waited, and in all things, put himself on a level with them. The beloved old disciples of the Master reconcile themselves to what obtains now, and love to fly on the holy wings of imagination to the past in quest of the aroma, which may persist, even when the rose has withered. To-day the only link with the past is perhaps the Master's little hut—the *Bhajan Kutir,* and it has since been very carefully preserved. Although the same old trees that gave shelter to the Master and his disciples, still stand, and the same breezy rustling can be heard breaking the solemn midnight silence, although externally everything goes on all right, yet

> It is not now as it hath been of yore ;
> Turn wheresoe'er I may,
> By night or day,
> The things which I have seen, I now can see no more.

It was at this *Asram* that the Master himself wrote, with a piece of chalk on the wall of his *Bhajan Kutir,* his seven great commandments:—1. Never indulge in self-praise. 2. Never speak ill of others. 3. *Ahimsa* is a great virtue. 4. Have compassion on all. 5. Place implicit reliance on the *Shastras* and the holy men. 6. Avoid, like poison, what is incompatible with the tenets of the *Shastras* and the teachings of saints. 7. Egoism is the worst enemy.

These noble maxims are the brightest gems of truth ensconced in all religions, and here, as elsewhere, the Master appears as a great universal Teacher, for, negative and antithetical idea he had none, and he always knew that "God is the great unity, in which every man's particular being is contained and made one with others, so that living in Him we have, as it were, one common heart". These are the common topics of ancient and modern moralists in all ages and climes. The peacock, spreading his gorgeous plumage and piquing the pride of the other birds, is an ugly sight. The person who trumpets forth his own virtues, plays into the hands of his enemies foolishly and unconsciously, so that they may assail the castle of Alma and take it at once. The envious detractors were called by the excellent Master 'moral lepers'. It has been said by Addison that the inestimable blessing, called the health of the soul, can be had, only when we drive out our chief aggressor, pride, the root of all the countless evils, which we cannot enumerate. Christ said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of Heaven is for them." And this meekness of spirit cannot co-exist with the tendency to fault-finding in others. The one evil leads up to another, so that at the end there rises the Himalayan pile of sin and sorrow, which crushes us down. So, this negative virtue is enforced by all religions.

The *Ahimsa* commandment of the Master also touches all religions—Jainism, Buddhism, Brahmanism. The *Ahimsa* doctrine of the Master did not perhaps originate merely in his realization of the Universal Soul-in-All-Things, his conviction of the homogeneity of all created beings. Or, in other words, it did not originate in a sense of world and life negation, although, in the history of religious thought, the *Ahimsa* cult may be traced to the mere ethic of non-activity in man's relations with inferior creatures. Arising purely from the ethic of keeping one's own self unpolluted, the *Ahimsa* commandment, in later times came to associate itself with natural helpful sympathy, and, in the Master's case, it could not mean the principle of life denial but intense fellow-feeling and active sympathy, since his next commandment in the list was Compassion. So long as *Ahimsa* is not conjoined to Compassion, it stands as an ethical abstraction and does not enter deeply into life. Not only in the religions of India—Jainism, Buddhism, and Brahmanism, but also in Chinese ethics, long before the contact with Indian thought, the *Ahimsa* commandment occupied a high place. The *Kan-Ying-P'ien* or The Book of Deeds and their Rewards contains some fine stories in elucidation of this doctrine. There was a soldier called Fan, whose wife long suffered from an internal wasting disease and was at last in the very jaws of death. It was said that she would recover, only if she would beat out the brains of a hundred sparrows. A hundred sparrows were brought and put in a cage before her. As the soldier's wife watched the sparrows, her eyes were dimmed with tears. She thought that she would joyfully die rather than take the lives of a hundred sparrows. The door of the cage was at once opened, and out flew the birds. Shortly after, she came round. The story is also told of the kind-hearted Tšao-Pin, who, though in utter discomfort, would not repair the house, because the cracks and fissures gave shelter to many living things. The *Ahimsa* commandment is, therefore, not peculiar to Indian thought, and to-day Gandhiji's doctrine of passive resistance is inspired by *Ahimsa*. All his precepts were the norms controlling the higher spiritual life, the centre of the circle at which the radii meet.

The Master's injunction upon his followers to abide by the *Shastras*, also commands universal acceptance, for, to-day when the *Shastras* have stood the test of free enquiry and criticism, prejudice against them has slowly died down. We cannot take free enquiry for our guide, for, however much we laud freethinking and claim to have acquired it, very few do really possess it. Jesus Christ said, "Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing see not; and hearing hear not, neither do they understand." Knowledge cannot be acquired without the 'universal and unprejudiced laying of oneself open.' The *Shastras* are the ocean without limit or bottom, where all streams of knowledge have met, and we must draw on them; for knowledge, in the real sense, is not acquired, even when there is the practical confronting of life, only for want of that unreserved judgment in us. It is better to obey the *Shastras* implicitly rather than twist and pervert them by our misunderstanding. In her book *Isis Unveiled,* Madam Blavatsky has said, "But has Plato ever been read understandingly by any of the expounders of the classics? The covert allusions of the Greek philosopher to esoteric things have manifestly baffled the commentators to the last degree. Being thus sworn to secrecy and religious silence upon abstruse subjects involving the relations of spirit and matter, they rivalled each other in their ingenious methods for concealing their real opinions." Madam Blavatsky also raised the question: "Should we not first regard the subject from the standpoint of the ancients before venturing to disparage its teachers?" It was in the same spirit that unquestioning obedience to the *Shastras* was laid down as a principle of conduct by the Master.

Vijaykrishna first took his abode at the *Asram* on the *Janmastami* day in 1295 B.S. Not that Vijaykrishna condemned in vehement terms the busy aspects of modern life, but that the freshness of the early world was ever on him, be he amidst the multifarious activities of town life, or the paradisal beauty of the jungly Gandaria. As a great mystic having a large inner life, he could see 'Christ walking not in the waters of Ganesareth but of Thames', but Gandaria appealed so much to him, because his beloved disciples needed that spiritual freedom, which comes in the wake of living in the bosom of Nature with a gleam of heavenly simplicity and pacific calm. When the site for the *Asram* was chosen, but the plot was not yet purchased, Vijaykrishna sometimes took some of his disciples to the place at early dawn, making his way, with difficulty, through a deserted bypath with ever-greens on both sides. By the time he reached the spot, the flickering flashes on the horizon grew brighter, and dark streaks flared into crimson. The Master stood motionless. Tears spouted from his eyes, and immediately he sank into *Samadhi*. The delicate pink and mauve with which the horizon was bathed, gave him a vision of the Spirit ; and artistic emotion, the realization of Beauty on the plane of the supersensible, overpowered him. The quest of the Beautiful was ever the *grande passion* with him, and Beauty to him not only guaranteed Truth but somehow constituted it.

But though he 'paced among the mountains', he never 'hid his face amid a crown of stars'. The daily round of duties in the *Asram* always went on with clock-like regularity. At early dawn the Master used to sprinkle rice for birds and even fed them with his own hands. Then he went into his *Bhajan Kutir* and as he came out, his disciples stood in wonder at his radiant blessedness. The breakfast over, late Kunja Behari Ghosh, Assistant Headmaster of Dacca Collegiate School, read out to him the *Sreemat Bhagabat,* the Life of Chaitanya by Kabiraj Goswami, and the hymns of Narottam Thakur. As he listened, his entire being saluted the Unseen Beloved, and all his limbs in his animated person became transparent with a glow of the spirit. When Kunja Babu finished, the Master himself began to read the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas, the *Bhagabat Purana,* and the *Grantha Sahib*. His spirit, that realized its oneness with the Infinite, as Nero did with his body, and Majnun with his Laila, infused an unseen strength into all around him, and every word full of enchanted sweetness went home. Even birds and beasts came and sat quietly by his side. Just at noon, he took his meals with his disciples. The afternoon was spent mostly in meditation and religious discussions. The Master at this time slept only for two or three hours at night. The Master's thoughts always soared so high that he is said to have run to the river-bank for thinking of the dirt and filth of the world, the impure, the murderous, and the depraved, in order to keep close to the world while speaking, for, to him Religion always meant Religion of life. The Mussalman Fakirs, the Bauls, the college students, the alumni of the University, gathered around him, and this most humane of Gurus that loved alike the Hindu and the Mussalman, the Brahmin and the Pariah, talked to them with indulgent kindness, and his counsels always belonged to the Book of Life, and they all went away satisfied.

As for subsistence Vijaykrishna, now as before, depended solely on God. Christ said:—

'So do not be troubled about tomorrow.
Tomorrow can take care of itself.
The troubles of the day are quite enough for the day.'

He was never perplexed, although there was not a morsel of bread in the *Asram,* and it was past noon and the invited guests (for not a day passed without guests being hospitably entertained) and his own men were quite a number. One day Jogajiban Goswami, the other-worldly and angelic son of the Acharya, now a youngman, invited Babu Nagendra Nath Chatterjee, one of the most intimate friends of Vijaykrishna in the Samaj. Nagendra Babu came to dine in due time. The iron tongue of Time struck twelve. Then a couple of hours passed. There was absolutely nothing wherewith Jogajiban could entertain him. Anxiety filled all. Only the Master remained unmoved. His silvery laugh and absolutely unconcerned looks, were a direct contrast to their dark fears! The light of his dreaming eyes was as serene and beautiful as star-light on a black night. At last, plenty of rice and vegetables came from somewhere, and the *Asram* resounded with thanksgiving to God. When the meals were over, Nagendra Babu was told what had been the situation, and this pure old man laughed heartily and loved the Master infinitely more from that time onwards.

None except the disciples could reside at the *Asram* at night, for the Master's disciples practised *Pranayam* in the still hours of the night. *Pranayam* could not possibly be practised in the presence of outsiders. Although the Master's *Yoga-Sadhana* belonged exclusively to the *Bhakti*-cult, and *Pranayam* was really a part of *Hatha-Yoga* and *Tantra Sadhan*, yet *Pranayam* was made an integral part of the *Yoga Sadhana*, for it helps to keep the body of the *Sadhaka* pure and sound and makes self-concentration easily possible. Normally, we have no control over the Vagus Nerve and its centre, and once with the help of *Pranayam*, we come to exercise control over it, all the vital forces are at once regulated and controlled. The two sets of fibres, which the Vagus Nerve possesses, come into play, as during the process of *Pranayam* there is alternate contraction and distension of the air vesicles at the point where the Vagus Nerve terminates. The control, thus obtained over the nervous impulse of the autonomic system, means the storing up of vital energy, and, for the matter of that, of cosmic energy. The nervous system is energised, only when by breath-control we are able to transfer to it a large amount of atmospheric energy or electricity, taken from the atmosphere to the lungs through the breath, and absorbed in the blood. This *Pranayam* was always spoken of by the Master as an auxiliary and never an essential of the *Yoga-Sadhana*.

The mysterious *Kundalini* or the coiled up Cosmic Energy in Man, has been identified by V. G. Rele with the Vagus Nerve. When the two sets of fibres—affarent and efferent—are excited to action by the control of respiratory processes in *Pranayam*, this nerve is set to work. The physiological explanation of the Grand Potential given by V. G. Rele, will not perhaps be accepted by many, although the explanation is of absorbing interest to us in our appraising the value of *Pranayam*. *Muladhar Chakra* is identified by the author with the pelvic plexus of the sympathetic system. *Ida* and *Pingala* are identified with the gangliated cords of the sympathetic system, and *Susumna*, with the spinal cord. We are not concerned so much with the scientific nature and the acceptability of the theory, as with the vital importance of *Pranayam*, made so much clear to us through this theory. For, Vijaykrishna laid particular emphasis upon *Pranayam* as an integral part of his *Sadhan*. Except for this *Pranayam*, there was absolutely nothing in it, which might strike us as esoteric.

It will be very wrong to suppose that this *Yoga-Sadhana* of Vijaykrishna aimed at the acquisition of *Yogic* powers through the control of the autonomic nervous system or *Kundalini*. To Vijaykrishna the acquisition and display of *Yogic* powers were always very disagreeable, and even though he possessed very high powers; such as, broadcasting his own thoughts and assimilating the unspoken thoughts of others, he never made them appear before the eyes of others and always kept them subservient to the *Bhakti* feeling in him. Through the practice of the *Kundalini Yoga*, it is very possible to pierce the six plexuses, and to detach the soul, and make it function through the Astral body, consisting of the *Akash* materials of very high vibrations, and then return to the physical body through the fine filament of ethereal substance, joining the Astral and the Physical, as we have seen in the case of Brahmánanda Paramahamsaji. *Bhakti* is such a thing that it spurns mirculous *Yogic* powers. Vijaykrishna rejected his young disciple Lalji for the latter's abuse of his *Yogic* powers. Lalji was a miraculous boy, and his erudition, that was wonderful for his age, commanded the awe and admiration of all. He mastered the *Bhakti Shastras* of the Hindus, and also the Quoran, and other authoritative religious books, but when, in spite of Vijaykrishna's repeated warnings, he could not refrain from using his powers, the beneficent Master, who wanted to keep him in *Bhavamukha*, drove him away. Lalji died broken-hearted, while yet the light of genius that shone in him, was in the crescent. Vijaykrishna plucked only the fruit of *Bhakti* from the Tree of Vision: he would be a *Bhakta* or be nothing else. He enjoined upon his disciples to practise only incessant prayer—a thing that has been warmly appreciated by the Westerners to-day. When not a breath is dissipated, *i.e.* the name of *Hari* is meditated upon through every inhalation and exhalation of breath, even the flow of blood in the system sings *Hari* after years of silent endeavour. There is no height from which a *Yogin,* with his high powers, does not fall, but when this silent inward meditation on the *Nama,* the nearest and most intimate expressive symbol of the Lord in words, flows on continuously like the ceaseless pouring of oil, in Ramanuja's phrase, the *Sadhaka* knows no backsliding in any case whatever, and his path is ever strewn with the flowers of intuitive spiritual experiences, which grow thicker and more fragrant, as more he proceeds through 'the ever-silent spaces of the East' to his land of real romance.

In the same year Gandaria *Asram* was established, Vijaykrishna arranged for the marriage of his daughter Santisudha and his son Yogajiban Goswami. Santi Devi was married to Jagabandhu Maitra of the village of Rukuni in Faridpur, and Yogajiban Goswami was married to Basanta Kumari Devi, sister of Jagabandhu Babu. Raghubardas Babaji of the Akashganga Hills was invited on the occasion, and there were moving *Kirtans* and great feasts in the *Asram.* It is surprising how the man who sank into *Samadhi* even during meals, even at the mere sight of 'vernal shower on the twinkling grass', could bring himself to do such things as marrying his son and daughter. Although, with the awakening of the level of *Vijnanam* and *Anandam,* and with the attainment of the crowning *Tattva,* nothing remained for him to do, yet he showed how religion, even at the time of absorptive eagerness of the *Sadhaka,* cannot exclude *ipso facto* the duties of life:

> The primal duties shine aloft like the stars ;
> The charities that soothe and heal and bless
> Are scattered about the feet of men like flowers.

CHAPTER XVI

GOD THE BEAUTIFUL LOVER

In *Tintern Abbey*, the great mystical poet Wordsworth presented the three distinct stages in his love of Nature. In the first stage, his love of Nature was a healthy boy's delight in the open air and freedom of the fields. In the second stage, the sensuous aspects of Nature provided enjoyment for him, and this enjoyment was altogether untouched by intellectual interests and associations. In the third stage, he became a new English Lurcretius, and Nature gave him a vision of the Living Transcendental, the realization of which is the highest consummation of life. Nature at this time enabled him to appreciate the current of pathos that underlies life, 'the still sad music of humanity', and gave him a robust mind with a robust optimism. The mystical feeling was deepened, and the verse gained a tidal irresistibility. Had not there been these three distinct evolutionary processes, Wordsworth could not have impressed us so much as a religious teacher. "I wish either to be considered as a teacher", said Wordsworth, "or as nothing". And he is so great as a teacher with a remarkable philosophy of life, because he 'lived' his poetry, because he had living experiences that the revelation of an eternal and obiquitous life in Nature does not come to a person all at once, but only when he has traversed the preliminary stages and got himself thoroughly prepared for it.

Likewise, Vijaykrishna had first to realize God as *Brahman* and *Paramatman*, before he could realize Him as *Bhagavan*. Now that he had realized the ultimate Reality as *Brahman* and *Paramatman*, the crowning realization (*Bhagavat-tattva*) was lying in wait for him. To him as to an ideal *Sadhaka*, God manifested Himself by degrees, and discipline in Indian philosophy became a fully concrete thing in him. The first stage is the realization of *Brahman* described by the *Bhagavat Cult* as the *Nirvisesha* state of *Bhagavan*, i.e. the state in which the potencies or *Swarupa Saktis* of *Bhagavan* are not in a kinetic state but in a potential state. *Bhagavan* is the eternal and fullest display of the *Antaranga* or internal *Swarupa Saktis*, which, according to the *Bhagavat Purana*, lend themselves to a classification under three heads: *Sandhini*, *Sambit*, and *Hladini*. And in this trinity, *Hladini* or *Anandam* is far more operative than the other two—*Sandhini* and *Sambit*, or *Sat* and *Chit*. According to pure Monism, *Brahman* is attributeless or *Nirvisesha*, but in Brahmoism, which, we know, is not a purely monistic theory, God is with attributes and also without attributes. As a Brahmo Vijaykrishna had full realization of *Nirguna Brahman*, but his religion also partook of the cult of *Bhakti* in his attempts to give definiteness to the abstract theism and in his concept of the ultimate Reality as also having attributes, although the perception of God as concretised Bliss in a human form, was then farthest from him. *Bhakti* was Vijaykrishna's dower, and hence it associated itself with his *Brahma-Jnanam*, which, as a necessary preliminary, he could not avoid, if he was to be steady and immovable in his faith, and not to doubt and waver like *Bhusundi the Crow* in Hindu Mythology, to quote his own words. The Brahmo brethren of Vijaykrishna were not so fortunate like him as to pass to the realization of the Absolute as

Bliss embodied in form, and hence, they misrepresented Vijaykrishna, when he changed his front, although standing on his own ground, and passed from the *Nirguna Brahma* to the *Saguna Brahma,* from the *Nirvisesha* state to the *Savisesha* state. Hence, also they could not understand him, when he said, so sure of himself, that he ever was a *Brahma.* A handful of men came out and ranked themselves as his followers and thus stole a march over their fellowmen in the Samaj. The derivative meaning of *Brahman* is 'that which grows and makes others grow', in both the casual and non-casual state. The Brahman 'spreads net-like or thread-like all over the universe' and is the same as *Bhagavan,* the ultimate Reality, just as the invisible wave of electricity in the ether is the same as the electricity that manifests itself through the bulb. When the *Bhagavat Cult* says that Bhagavan is *Para-Brahman* or the *Pratistha* of *Brahman* (*'Brahmano hi pratisthaham'* —the *Gita*), *Bhagavan* is not differentiated from the *Brahman,* but is represented as the fuller and more complete manifestation of the *Brahman.* The realization of *Advaya Jnana* as *Bhagavan* is far more productive of supreme joy to the *Sadhaka* than the realization as *Brahman,* and that is the only differentia ; and a *Sattvata* or the worshipper of *Bhàgavan* and a *Jnanin* or the worshipper of *Brahman* do not really sit at cross-roads, but both are on the way to Jerusalem to 'turn again home', and the path of the latter meets at a certain point with that of the former.

In the hierarchy of the endless manifestations of the ultimate Reality to the *Sadhaka, Paramatman* comes next to *Brahman.* This *Paramatman* or *Kshetrajna Atma,* in the language of the *Gita,* is the immanent Regulator of all beings in the universe, and just as *Brahman* is to be distinguished from *Para-Brahman,* so *Atman* or *Purusha* is to be distinguished from *Purushottama*. The *Jiva* is also called *Kshetrajna,* but it is to *Paramatman* that this qualification rightly applies. The relation of the individual soul to the Supreme Self is brought out in Wallace's Logic of Hegelian view of Personality:—"This union of individuality and universality in a single manifestation with the implication that the individuality is the essential and permanent element to which the universality is almost in the nature of an accident, is what forms the cardinal point in personality." We have had in an earlier chapter a discussion on Vijaykrishna's realizations of *Paramatman,* and we have now to see how they could not give him perfect joy which alone *Bhagavan* in the human form can. In *Chaitanya Charitamrita, Brahman* is described as a compact mass of Light illuminating the universe ; *Paramatman,* as the endless radiating solar rays vitalizing the universe ; and *Bhagavan,* the Primeval Source, as the great solar disc. So this leaves no room for doubt that *Bhagavat-tattva* is the highest of all *tattvas*.

This we may call Vijaykrishna's return to the concrete. We have seen him as a boy, hugging to his bosom the beautiful idol of Shyam Sundar. The 'interim' was dominated by the formless Absolute. And now again the Absolute appeared in the human form. As a boy he was not cognizant of the Absolute in the idol. He loved the idol so much, because intuition or primitive cognition led him to do so. Many people, worshipping the idol of God without having the necessary philosophical illumination and psychological wisdom, have been found to degenerate into idolators with their vision limited to the sense-mind. But as Vijaykrishna's realization of the concrete Absolute was backed by his realization of the formless Absolute, he built not on shifting sands but on unshakable foundations. Since he had a fore-knowledge of the *Sat-chit-ananda* in the abstract, which *Bhagavat-tattva* presupposes, he at this time knew fully well that the form of the Absolute is made up of supersensuous elements, and God's appearance as a man is what we may call self-determination. Without the necessary background of *Advaya Brahmo-Jnanam,* the world of *Lila* or the beatific sports of *Bhagavan* appears to be full of enigmas and palpable absurdities. None but a prepared mind can appreciate how in the sport of dining, Sree Krishna, the *Para-Brahman* of the *Upanishads,* although confined to the human body and sitting pretty much in the centre among the *Gopas,* could actually face each *Gopa,* talk with him, and touch him at one and the same time. Vijaykrishna's devotion, at this time, became so very strong that God, who ever identifies Himself with his *Bhakta,* could not keep away from him, and He appeared before him in the human form ; for it has been said that the human form is the supreme form of the Absolute.

Not only in our own philosophy but also in the Christian doctrine and the Islamic faith, do we find the mention of God in the human form. In Christianity we have, "God made Man after his own image", and herein the theory of God, having a body similar to that of Man, is tacitly accepted. We also read how Hazrat Musa could not rest satisfied with the realization of the halo of Allah, and when afterwards he was favoured with the sight of the Lord, he forthwith swooned away. But it is only in the Vaishnava system of faith that this aspect of God is clearly brought out, and it is only in our country that, in the inner apartment of the temple with closed doors, the

Bhakta is said to have actually heard the Voice of the Beloved and talked with Him, and even touched and embraced Him. Vijaykrishna talked so many times with Sree Krishna and Sachinandan, and Ramkrishna also did so with his Goddess in his temple at Dakshineswar. One day a Brahmo came to Vijaykrishna and asked him if he had seen God with his eyes. Vijaykrishna at once replied, "I have seen Him. I have felt His hands and feet. Never say again that God has no form. I am pained at heart." A similar question was put to Ramkrishna by that avowed sceptic and intellectual with an *Imperator* brain Vivekananda:—"Have you seen God?" Ramkrishna promptly returned, "I see Him, as I see you, only far more intensely." Everything depends on the fiat of His volitions ; the Unlimited becomes Limited and the Limited becomes Unlimited again. His Grace is all in all.

In the *Savisesha* state of *Bhagavan* as *Paramatman,* the lordliness posits itself through the causality of Creation by the display of *Maya-sakti,* but in the concept of *Bhagavan* proper, there is no display of *Vahiranga Sakti* but always of *Antaranga Sakti,* and although the six lordlinesses are present to the fullest extent, they are subservient to and sublimated by, the illimitable sweetness of the Lord. For, to his beloved *Bhakta,* God loves to show his indescribably graceful charm ; God takes him by the arms, seats him by His side, and whispers, "Thou art I." In the emotional ecstasy, the *Bhakta* also forgets the distinction between himself and the Beloved. This is a temporary suspension of the distinction of the subject and the object, but not the merging of the finite in the Infinite, according to the monistic theory of the Neo-Platonists. So the *Bhakta* leads the life of sense-enjoyments on the plane of the super-sensible. His is not the life of self-denial and of negative virtues. The *Upanishads,* in which this highest kind of God-realization is but casually referred to, tell us that He Himself is *Rasa* (Essence of Love), and the derivative meaning of *Rasa* is 'to enjoy and make others enjoy'. But there are devotees and devotees, and the realization differs. Those devotees that are the worshippers of God as Love Eternal, are nearest to God, for they are like the most intimate friends of the King. As the earthly representative of God (although to say so would be profanity in the modern democratic age, when kingship has heard its knell!) the king must also be a bundle of contrarieties! While, in the display of his tremendous prowess and sublime public capacities, he simply dazzles the eyes of his subjects with his costly garb and royal staff, he unfolds his heart to his queen and intimate friends in the Garden of Venus. Of his deeper aspects and very human qualities, even the most loyal of his subjects or the most devoted of his courtiers cannot have any taste. The case of God is exactly similar, and that is why we are mutually conquered, when the highest aspect of love is reached. The *Bhakta* approaches his Beloved and, washed in tears of love, proceeds, "I will draw near to Thee in silence and uncover Thy feet that it may please Thee to unite me to Thyself. Make myself Thy bride, and I will rejoice in nothing till I am in Thy arms."

This Eternal Bride is Sree Radha, espousing the Eternal Beloved Sree Krishna. The term Krishna does not occur in the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads,* the natural development of which is the *Bhagavat Purana,* the most authoritative of the *Bhakti Shastras.* The *Bhagavat* uses that term in lieu of *Para-Brahman,* because here Love with its limitless horizon of emancipation, the Angel of

Surplus in Creation, is the most predominant. The essential Krishnaism is Love, and is quite unconcerned about His *Maya-sakti* with its causalities of creation and sustention of the universe. Sree Krishna is eternally engaged in beatific sports. These beatific sports, the eternity of which is their most distinguishing feature, are both manifest and unmanifest. They are unmanifest, when Sree Krishna is in His supersensuous heaven-trio ; and manifest, when, with His ring-dance of associates, He comes down to the phenomenal world to hold before Man the energising truth that the Absolute, the *impartite,* immutable, universally infinite Power, Whom the greatest of *Sadhakas* climbing to the last difficult *arete,* in their severest *Yogic* meditation, cannot even conceive with the grand totality of all their impressions and achievements, is most approachable, nay, conquerable, by Love alone. The greatest of Sree Krishna's associates in this manifest *Lila* is the divinity of His third and greatest attribute, in which are merged the other two in this His highest and fullest manifestation. This divinity is no other than Sree Radha, the constantly worshipped of the Vaishnavas, and the relation She bears to Sree Krishna is one of difference and non-difference, as Maha-Saraswati does to Lord Vasudev, the name given to Krishna, when He is in the fullest display of His inconceivable Might and Attributes.

Sree Krishna in Brindaban, His eternal home, is the human Lover, adding sweetness to sweetness, breaking down the cage of every heart, and extending its horizon to embrace the unbounded sky beyond it. He is the Eternal Beggar at the door of every heart, for His message is "Love, O Man, Love." But we are hopelessly lost in the din and clamour of life, the illusory phantoms take our hearts, and we see not the abyss under the glittering quicksand, a few yards off our feet. To the trueest lover, the greatest Love-God is eternally bound, and even when there is separation, there is no absence. When Sree Krishna left for Mathura, the air was thick with wailings, but there was no real sorrow, for Love reigned supreme over the gloom, as it did over the Ruined City in Browning's poem. In order that there might be a spacious field, where the beatitude of the element of Bliss could have the fullest and most unrestricted play, Sree Radha, the ideal devotee, created out of Herself a number of fellow-women to be called *Gopis,* just as a *Yogin* in order to serve his purpose produces, with the help of his occult power, a number of bodies at one and the same time. In the language of Science, this may be called 'dissociation of personality', but that would not be very true ; for each *Gopi* like each personality is not as complete as Sree Radha. She herself is a match for all of them put together. Although the term Sree Radha is nowhere to be found in the whole of the *Bhagavat,* She is not an invention of latter-day popular Mysticism as distinguished from the classical Mysticism of the *Bhagavat.* Enough has been said of her in the *Bhagavat,* and this gives no ground for doubting her existence, as the very bath of fire in the Love-play of Sree Krishna is depicted in that classic. The non-mention of her name in the *Bhagavat* is as mysterious as the absence of the word *Maya* from the commentary of the *Upanishads* by *Sankar,* the greatest expounder of *Mayavad.*

So it comes to this that the highest manifestation of Godhead consists not in the six-lordlinesses and their working, but in their sublimation by and subservience to, Love. Sree Krishna forgets all His *Antaranga* and *Vahiranga Swarupa Saktis* in His total absorption in this only one of His *Antaranga Saktis,* and the highest *Sadhan* possible for a human and a divine is the realization of such a Krishna, and not the realization of the Lordly Bhagavan, nor that of Narayana as conceived by the Ramanujists of Southern India. The *Bhagavat* is our only authority for this religion of Love. Even the *Gita,* with its grand synthetisation of all religions, fails. In the earlier verses, the Teacher, the 'I' of the *Gita,* praises, in free accents, the worshippers of the *Brahman* (*Brahma° bhuta prasannatma* &c.) and then He proceeds to eulogise the realization of Bhagavan as *Paramatma Purusha ;* and it is only at the end, after such instructions as *sic vos non vorbis,* that a discussion on pure *Bhakti-Dharma* is initiated in a casual manner. And thus it is that the religion of the *Bhagavat* begins where the religion of the *Gita* ends ; but that does not, in any way, indicate the incompleteness of the *Gita ;* for it is the ambrosia, the food of the gods, churned out of the unbounded ocean of the ancient Hindu *Shastras,* especially the *Upanishads,* the essence of the mighty Vedanta.

Of the various kinds of love beautifully analysed by Badarayani, the crimson love of Sree Radha is the highest. Only She is able to conquer Him by conquering all His lordlinesses, just as *Kundalini* or the Serpent Power in the human body is alone capable of forcing open the *Brahmadwar* in the cavity of the brains, so that the finite may be joined to the Infinite in an absolute merge. Newman has brought out the import of this Radha-Krishna-cult, when he has said,—"If thy soul is to go to higher spiritual blessedness, it must become a woman, however manly thou mayest be among men." The love of the *Gopis* is like the lovely moon that shines in cloudless glory, in the vast autumnal heavens. That is why Swami

Vivekananda spoke in a trumpet-voice that was so peculiarly his:—"Forget first the love for gold and name and fame and for this little three-penny world of ours. Then, only then, you will understand the love of the *Gopis,* too holy to be attempted without giving up everything, too sacred to be understood until the soul has become perfectly pure. People with ideas of sex, and of money and fame, bubbling up every minute in the heart, daring to criticise and understand the love of the *Gopis!*"

The Mother Yasoda also loved her child Sree Krishna to the uttermost of motherly affection, but at times she was startled, as she happened to see the whole vast universe, the Titan Ether of Empedocles and the endless series of *Natura Naturans,* in the little mouth of her baby. Of course, her wonderfully expansive motherly love got the better of her ; and a priest was brought, who uttered a long incantation, supposed to drive away the devil, afflicting the child! Yasoda had another supernatural experience, when she failed, with all her might, to bind the little limb of her child with a piece of cord too long for the business. Although Sree Krishna yielded to her wearied mother, yet the fact remains that even the overflowing motherliness of Yasoda was not as strong as the love of the *Gopis* to wean Sree Krishna from this display of lordliness. All lordliness evaporated completely at the warm touch of Sree Radha's love and He forgot that He was the Absolute, the Originator of the radiant Energy of Creation, Whose manifestations are the endless Purushas, and that He became a Man talking and dancing with this Flower of the Heavens become Woman. 'Fountain of Light, Thyself Invisible' not only became visible but allowed Himself to be conquered for ever.

The sparkling stream of celestial joy, that runs underground through the entire *Upanishads,* has now welled up to the surface like a splashing river of Paradise. If the Great Wish, 'May I be many'', if the act of bringing Himself to the bondage of the *Bhutas,* be inspired by Joy, a thousand times more an outcome of Joy is the self-giving of the Absolute ; and if the *Atman* in bondage as a nebulla of consciousness in the biggest organism and in the mono-cellular protozoa experiences Joy, a thousand times more an experiencer of Joy is Sree Radha, the great divinity of Felicity. The objective idealism of Hegel is far from satisfactory as an explanation of Creation ; for the Absolute is always Absolute, and He has not to realize His Absoluteness concretely through any creative processes. Neither the empirical western thinker like Hegel, nor Sankar and Ramanuja of our country, can satisfy us so much as this explanation of Creation as 'Sport', given by the *Vedanta Sutra* (II, i, 33) and the dictum of Heraclitus (''Making worlds is Zeus' pastime'') and that of Plato in his Laws (''Man is made to be the play-thing of God''). Spinoza struck a discordant note, when he attributed a motive to God's Creation and wrote: ''If God be the external cause or contriver of the world, the act of creation must be purposive ; and a purpose of this sort which cannot find satisfaction within the range of pre-existent implies want or imperfection. Why did God create World? What is the reason that the Absolute unity should go beyond itself to manifest or reveal itself in the manifoldness of infinite existence? Was He weary with His inactivity, or did He want to have something to please His eyes, that He was led to contrive the world?'' God is eternally Perfect, and all purposes are fulfilled in Him ; and the only purpose He might have in His *Ikshana* was certainly Joy, *i.e.* enjoyment of Himself by Himself as an experiencer. But the bliss potency of God could not have a full play in creation ; for the intrinsic self-hood of God is hidden by the play of *Maya-sakti*. Nevertheless, it is all play, all fun, creation is. Swami Vivekananda said to Sister Nivedita:—"You know we have a theory that the universe is God's manifestation of Himself just for fun . . . ! Play—it was all play . . . just play with the Lord. Say: it (life) is all play, it is all play." But though an out-pouring of a particle of joy whose endless container He Himself is, the universe is not the proper theatre for God's 'beatific' sports, and however much it might be appreciated by us as the divine musical love-drama, an exquisite cinema-picture with its endless panorama of colours and forms, yet the Master-hand of the Artist, the Baton of the Conductor, and the play with the technique of Instrument, expanding or contracting our vision, remain dark to us owing to *Maya*.

There is a meaning of delight in the gramophone disc, but unless we hear the music speaking feelingly to the heart, the revolving disc is nothing to us. Similarly, if the universe is a feast of love and sacrifice, we must first receive the message of joy through the magic of personality, before we can hope to realize and appreciate it in its proper perspective. But owing to the working of *Maya* in her dual aspects, analogous to the Efficient Cause and the Material Cause in the Aristotelian system, we cannot see the eternal play of the bliss potency of God in this 'existential' universe, and thus the intrinsic self-hood of God, the essential Krishnaism, is not revealed to us. We all love to look at the sun, drinking, in a rich draught, the overflowing health and beauty, when the eastern horizon is flushed with the first pink of the morn. But at the blazing summer noon, the bright halo of the sun simply overpowers our vision, and hence the fiery furnace of the midday sun is respected with a feeling of awe and reverence and not loved and enjoyed like the first red rays in the silent morning hours. The same is true of our experience, when we try to realize the perennial sportiveness of God in creation. The *Upadan Maya Sakti* of *Bhagavan,* to which are ascribed the causality of creation and sustention of the universe, is revelatory of God's dazzling external qualities, and hence creation gives us the impresison of the lordship of God and not of the immeasurable wealth of His inner qualities even after our overthrow of the *Jiva Maya.* Hence, to make His beatific sports manifest to His dearest devotees, Sree Krishna comes down with His eternal associates to this world as Man the Eternal. With the descent of this Angel of Love from the blue sky to the lap of the Earth, everything begins to pulsate with a new life. Everywhere sweetness is added unto sweetness.

When we hear of Sree Krishna, overpowering even animals and trees, there is no reason why we should wonder at it; for a group of psychologists like Pierre, Huber, Romenes, Sir John Lubbock have shown how animals can express the uprush of emotion in their hearts, although there is absent in them the 'original structure of the nature of intellectual ideation, which is the characteristic of language proper'. The plants and trees, likewise, experienced intense joy and showered their products of flowers and lowering their dewy tremulous boughs, touched the feet of Krishna, as he passed stealthily along. Such a dancing God could not fail to touch the heart of even Nietzsche. Zarathustra speaks:

> "I should only believe in a God
> That would know how to dance."

It is not the mad-dance of Shiva full of awe and sublimity, but the love-dance of Krishna, the festivity of delight. His flute is the eternal symbol of spiritual syntheticism, whereas an ordinary flute is merely a synthesis of sounds. All differences and distinctions are conquered through that flute alone. The colour of the new cloud or of the blue full-blown lotus, at once makes him the supernatural Eros. Love is ever young, and it ever renews itself in fresh rosy colours ; and hence Sree Krishna is the Eternal Masculine and Sree Radha is the Eternal Feminine in the enjoyment of Eternal Youth. This Idealistico-Realistic explanation silences all criticisms, and yet vicious sense-minds have not spared the Krishna cult and also the Gouranga cult, as the divinity of Christ was violently attacked by the Ebonites, the Nazarenes, the Alogi, Fichte, Hegel, Renan, Spinoza, Herbert Toland, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, and Strauss.

Immediately after His 'birth', the Illuminer of the prison-house made Vasudev carry Him to the house of Nanda Maharaj, where He flung Himself into the arms of Yasoda and sucked Her breast, as Yasoda was an embodiment of motherly love, whereas Devaki was merely constituted of the *chit* element of Krishna. As His advent on earth has for its object the enjoyment and manifestation of His own supreme bliss, Self-*maya* is employed by him only to hoodwink those who are not worthy enough to realize His real self-hood. The *Jiva* must be naturally prone to the acquisition of Truth and Goodness, an emanation of God that he is ; and it is a point, on which there cannot possibly be any disparity of opinion from intellectual Vedantism to the over-emotional *Sahajiya*. But confined to the world of Maya, the *Jiva* pursues a course of life, which, we may say, is an aberration from the path of God, just as a pencil of the rays of the sun has its normal course changed owing to atmospheric refraction. The *Jiva,* who has leaped like a trout out of the stream of Illusion, is no longer deluded by the images, which Time is constanly churning out of the vague. 'The soul's east window of divine surprise' is now opened, and he stands on the high vantage of the watch-tower of faith, while others, with their vested interests in the darkness of the world, stand at the foot. But since all are self-transcendent beings, the sense of infinity, of eternity, steals into their souls sooner or later, and they at once embark on a voyage to the uttermost beyond, the endless Farther. This home-sickness, this cry for 'a more yet', raises the little *Jiva* out of the walls of a self-centred life, and he becomes a cosmic man in his life's pilgrimage to the unknown. This spiritual life is what Tagore means by 'The surplus in Man'. An American writer beautifully observes, "We are for ever ourselves *plus,* and the plus is the main fact."

The physical health depends on the energising of the red corpuscles of the blood of the system with the oxygen of the enveloping air, and the spiritual health depends on the vital contact of the isolated stream of individual life with the broad stream of universal life. Only the redeemed souls, singing pæans of light in the grey dusk of dawn, can be admitted into the bewitching moon-lit lawn of *Lila*. The millions, not yet initiated into the mysteries of the Infinite, with the mist-wraith of *Maya* blurring down their vision, stand outside. Hence, the employment of *Yoga-maya* is so needed. Sree Krishna is always drawing them and taking sides with them, but the unfortunates do not know how to answer that call. God has so ordained things that, in this world of contrast, man must fight in order to be free. "The stars in their courses have all along fought against Sisera and his kind." This fighting is self-disciplining. We must pick up certain things and leave out some others. We must choose Jacob and reject Esau. No gushing stream of wordy exuberance of the professor of rhetoric and elocution, no overzeal in abstract discussions of accredited theologians, can nourish the stuff and fibre of the soul, unless we try to obliterate what is unrhythmic in life's movement, and to unite its cadence with the magic of the universal song by silent slow-footed march of the spirit, unless we discipline ourselves to avert the tempter that ruined Eve of the Semitic mythology. The moment we throw away the props of self-discipline, not only the spirit of Life cries "Halt", and the lute of our soul is unstringed, but we are lost in the heavy brigade of foes that rounds us in all their tigerliness.

In Hasting's *Encylopedia of Religion and Ethics*, discipline is defined as being antithetical to doctrine. The latter, it is stated therein, belongs to the *discipulus* or the scholar, while the former, to the doctor or teacher. "Psychology demands that such discipline shall embrace the whole nature of man, in its threefold aspect of knowing, desiring, and willing." When by discipline one oversteps the bounds of *Mayā*, the spirit leading him all the way, the manifold miseries are at once extinct for him. It is only then that he moves free, like the bird that has shattered the limited shell of the egg, in the atmosphere of the infinite. The lives of all great *Sadhakas* are a chart of spiritual progress, showing where they stand. The participation in God's *Lila* is possible only for liberated souls hankering after *Bhakti*, not to speak of the countless millions, the beginning of whose spiritual orientation is yet a thing of the future. Hence, when Krishna and

His eternal associates are revealing themselves to the uttermost to each other, and the purest and noblest emotions are called forth, *Maya* will not let go her hold, so that the same dense obtuseness continues, and the illusions, to which she, 'the art in creation', has imparted a convincingness, are pursued with all their maledictions. And the heart-ravishing music of the flute, that made the simple *Gopis* of Brindaban forget themselves and their surroundings ; that silenced the melody called *Gauri* of the greatest of musicians, Tumbura, in Indra's heaven ; that stirred Vali in the nether kingdom ; and that broke the *Samadhi,* enjoyed by the God-inspired saints like Sanaka and Sanatan ; simply jars on the ears of the victims of *Maya* as it did on those of *Jatila* and *Kutila.*

This admission to the world of *Lila,* the 'House of Songs', the attainment of *Prem,* the fulfilment of *Bhakti,* was Vijaykrishna's goal. And now that the love-ecstasy of this super-mystic filled all his actions with a new and unuttered meaning and set all near him a-dance, he loved Sree Krishna not with his fathomless devotion of the *Yogic* stage, nor even with the service attitude, but with the sweet and tender love for Him as a friend and with the deepest and most perfect love for Him as his dearest beloved. The tutelary God, Shyam Sundar, now appeared in the human form, which is God's own form, and asked for a golden crown. Vijaykrishna replied with the sweet liberty of a friend, "Where shall I get money?" Shyam Sundar at once replied, "Your *Ranga Khuri* (aunt) has kept sixty rupees in her basket. Ask her to get a crown for me."

In the *Mahabhava* of Radha, there is not the slightest tinge of awesome reverence or injunctory *Bhakti,* induced by the Lordliness of Krishna, and hence, in attaining this love of God, the summit of the ascent, Vijaykrishna attained a state than which nothing could be higher and happier. It is 'love allied to ignorance', in Browning's phrase, very far removed from the *amor intellectualis dei* of Spinozism. This *Radhabhava* at once gave him the badge and mark of a Gourangite. In our enthusiasm for the full-blown rose, we seem to forget the process of blooming, the silent action on it of sunshine, air, and dew. And sometimes it is seen that the stage of preparation is even more instructive and enjoyable than the goal itself, not only to the purveyor but also to the *Sadhaka,* the 'Happy Finder' himself. Lessing is to have remarked: "If I had truth in my right hand and the search after truth in my left hand, and had to choose between them, I should choose the left hand." If Vijaykrishna's earlier life showed him as a profoundly spiritual man, his later life would present him as the perfect *Bhakta,* with love flowing in torrents to God. The first stage was the striving for Release with a starting faith in the all-transcending character of *Bhakti ;* and the second stage was the indescribable enjoyment of the blissful contiguity of the Beloved. If the first part makes us exclaim, "How wonderful!" the second, "How enchantingly sweet!" Though now the highest *Bhakta,* Vijaykrishna never forgot the steps by which he rose, so that he always spoke of gradations ; and the beginning of 'the seeker attitude' he defined as a developing sense of morality—the sense that keeps us ever on the alert that the Cain in us does not slay the Abel, that the eternal Kamsa, the will-to-live, does not smother the tendency to love and serve. To serve is to live, never the *Dienen, dienen* of Kundry in *Parsifal.* And the realization of the self, the one reality amidst the baubles, the patterns of appearances, the Soul of which alone was not told *Memento quia pulvis es,* having indivisible identity with the All-pervading Personality, was defined by him as the doorway to the Garden of *Lila*.

"Speak to Him thou for He hears, and
Spirit with spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer
than hands or feet."

But as yet no personal relationship is established between God and the devotee. Hence, this must give way to Love with relationship.

"The best is yet to be
The last of life for which the first was made."

It is rightly argued that it is not an easy transition from *Jnana-Marga,* the path of meditation on *Nirvisesha Brahman,* to pure *Bhakti-Marga* or the realization of the essential Krishna ; and such sharp turnings are not possible in the brief span of a life's existence. And that is why the *Jnanins* or the *Yogins* that have attained *Mukti* or liberation or *Nirvana* consummation through the glorification of the *via negativa* or the extinction of the mind, voluntarily take re-birth in the hope of attaining the nectarean *Prem-Bhakti,* where God is no gigantic inert mass nor the spirit, but the human, the ever-young the ever-loving master-dancer. If that is so, if the *Nirvana* consummation does not leave room for *Bhakti*-preoccupation so soon, it seems difficult to understand how in his short life of about fifty-eight years, Vijaykrishna could present the vast endless sweep of *Sadhana* from the very infant stage to the very highest. This unravels the infinite mystery, the grand secret of his life. His *Brahma-Jnanam* and *Yoga* were not independent ways of *Sadhana,* but were ever set against the background of the *Bhakti*-feeling. There are two ways of *Brahma-Sadhan* according to the Bhagavat texts—

realization of *Brahman* for Release *with* an initial faith in *Bhakti*, and meditation on *Brahman* for Release *without* the accompanying *Bhakti*. Vijaykrishna resorted to the former. Therefore, even after the five kinds of *Mukti—Sajujya, Sarsti, Salokya, Samipya, Swarupya—* in the process of the absolute immersion of the purest redeemed soul, his race was not run.

> "And yet be patient. Our playwright may show
> In some fifth Act what this drama means."

The religion of the Brahmo Samaj was a chemical mixture of the elements of *Jnanam* and *Bhakti*, and in the case of Vijaykrishna as also in that of Keshav to some extent, the *Bhakti*-element was much deeper than in their compeers. This we have sought to explain in an earlier chapter, and we have also shown that the abstractions, that encumbered the Theism of the Samaj, gave way to a certain amount of concreteness, (which is the criterion of *Bhakti*-Discipline) through the efforts of Keshav Chandra and the personality of Vijaykrishna. Devendranath's *Brahma-Sadhan* was irrespective of a burning faith in Bhagavan, and that is why his great realization, the oneness of himself with *Brahman*, left no longing in him unappeased. Devendranath is one of the rarest figures in the religious history of modern India, but like the men in the Plains of Shinar in the story of the Genesis, he built a lofty tower into the sky to find the City of God. He found and knew Him. But the other and much more delightful half of the story in which not man but God is the seeker, was perhaps a sealed book to him. Those who had "speculation" in their eyes, in the phrase of Shakespeare, could well perceive, when they saw Vijaykrishna as a *Brahma-Jnanin*, that he did not merely carry in him a great future, but was even then a *Bhakta* of a high stature. Chaitanya Das Babaji of Navadwip ws so much impressed by his first sight that he shivered from head to foot, and all his hairs stood on end in excitement. In the person of the avowed *Brahma-Jnanin,* he could discern all the signs of *Bhakti,* invisible as they were to others. To one who forgets that, from the start of his unique career, Vijaykrishna's heart acted for *Bhakti,* his rapid transition to *Lila-sadhan* would remain an inexplicable phenomenon. After the temporary phase of Vedantism which, however, had its necessity in counteracting the gross materialistic influences of Calcutta more than any other religious system, Vijaykrishna realized the pathos of the path of the negative—

> "Whatever your mind comes at,
> I tell you flat
> God is not that,"

and his inborn *Bhakti*-feeling returned in all its sweetness and associated itself with his *Brahma-sadhan.* Bhagavan Himself, so runs the text of the *Bhagavat Purana,* raises the worshippers of *Brahman,* possessing an unshakable faith in *Bhakti,* out of the state of merge (Brahmahood) to allow them to have their initial desire fulfilled. Had Keshav also lived, nobody knows whither his race would have ended. *Bhakti* here, though an accompanying force, is powerful enough. Vijaykrishna's *Yoga*-consummation was really *Yoga-Misra* or *Santa Bhakti,* in Vaishnava phraseology. *Brahma-Jnanam* and *Yoga* and the ultimate *Lila-sadhan* were not really three independent courses, but milestones in the one onward leading path of *Bhakti.* The gradations were the three curves in the same upward-climbing spiral. Or, they were three flats, each complete in itself, of the same structure, and to say that it was like building three houses, each seeming stuffy after a time, would be an uttermost mistake. The former is a highly beautiful idea, but no decent man would like the latter.

It was a heavenly dispensation that Vijaykrishna did not pass into pure *Bhakti-sadhan* all at once ; for we have already shown that *Bhakti* must have an accompaniment in *Jnanam* for its rise. Everywhere, for the fruition of either *Karma* or *Jnana, Bhakti* must be conjoined. In the sacrificial Mysticism of the Vedic Age, perfect and rigid accuracy in the ritualistic performances was all in all, so that owing to some trivial mispronunciation of some *mantra,* Tvashta as a result of the sacrifice obtained a son who was not to kill Indra but whom Indra was to kill. But it is strange to find even here the elements of *Sraddha* and *Bhakti,* and therefore Vedicism was not a mechanical and lifeless religion, however much it might appear to have been so, to all outward superficial observances. It is because the *Yajaman* was inspired by *Sraddha* that the reward of the holy rites came to him and not to the *Brahmin* priest, who conducted them, although it is an accepted principle in religion that none but the worker enjoys the fruits. Under the salutary influence of *Bhakti,* polytheism gave way to monotheism in the Vedic Religion. *Sraddha* and *Bhakti* also showed themselves in *Vrata, Dan,* and *Tapasya* in the Vedic society. *Bhakti* made Vijaykrishna's *Brahma-sadhan* a reality and prepared for what followed, just as *Bhakti*-elements, however feeble, sublimated Vedicism and pointed the way to grander things in Hindu Mysticism. The absence of *Bhakti* would have squeezed the life out of Vedicism, just as the want of co-operation of *Bhakti* with *Brahma-jnanam* in the life of the Master, would have made him an Intuitional Theist all along, and not what he became.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MASTER AND CHAITANYAISM

Out of the doctrine of manifested *Brahman,* evolves the doctrine of Incarnations. And when Vijaykrishna worshipped, with the most perfect love, Krishna as *Advaya-jnana-tattva,* he came to believe in the doctrine of incarnation, which he refused to accept in the earlier stage. This is the same as that of the *Vedas,* and the *Upanishads* make no direct mention of incarnation, but the *Gita* and the *Bhagavat,* which are nothing but the interpretations of and developments from, the former, celebrate it so much. If there is no contradiction between the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* or the *Bhagavat,* the non-mention of incarnation in the former and its celebration in the latter, would present an insoluble difficulty, unless we know that the doctrine of incarnation remains implied in the *Kenopanishat* in the reference to the assumption of the form of the daughter of *Himawat* by *Brahman.* Such like hints develop into clear and explicit statements, just as the faint message of light behind the dewy veil of the autumnal morning, passes into broad clear light with a little passing of time. When we are in the *Upanishad* stage, we do not believe in incarnation, but the *Gita* and *Purana* stage makes Avatarhood not only believable but definitely necessary. When the teaching of the *Gita* and the *Bhagavat* is that sportiveness is God's very nature, and that the quantum of devotion in the worshipper makes the concrete self-manifestation of God necessary, we must come to incarnations as a matter of course. The realization of, or even belief in, the concretised *Brahman* is the seed of the many-branched tree of incarnations. Vijaykrishna's acceptance of the doctrine of incarnation, in spite of his former staunch denial of it, was no more a contradiction of himself than there is a contradiction between water and ice, the seed and the fruit, the dawn and the day, light and the spectrum. If Vijaykrishna contradicted himself, he did so like the observers of Narada in his descent from Heaven, described by poet Magh in his *Sisupalvadha*. We cannot raise a wall of separation between the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* any more than we can do so between the period, when Vijaykrishna recognized Chaitanya as the Prophet of Nadia and that, when he recognized Him as the highest of incarnations. His life knew no sharp cleavage, no noisy contradiction. Silent inward processes worked invisibly before a realization came like invisible 'wireless' waves in the ether of space before the actual reproduction of speech and music in a wireless set. His position was not that of a man who suddenly awakes and finds that he has been labouring under a misconception, or that he has been subject to the defect of short-sightedness and hastily turns round and laughs at the views he has outgrown. His vision of the *Brahman* as the Mother, when he exclaimed from the pulpit of the East Bengal Samaj—"Lo, Mother is come" —besides showing the advance of the God-idea of the Samaj, prepared him silently for the incarnation of Godhead, just as the appearance of an embodied being in the sky after shapeless luminosity, prepared the mind of the spectators for the advent of Narada. Or, this lightning revelation was of the nature of the cursory *Upanishadic* reference to *Brahman's* assumption of the definite form of Uma, so that it might be regarded as the fore-shadowing of his later faith, as the *Upanishadic* reference was of the *Avatarhood* of the *Gita*.

But when Vijaykrishna came to *Avatarhood,* not all *Avatars,* nor even those in human forms, could engage him as much as Chaitanya did. Descriptions of *Avatars* crowd the pages of the Hindu scriptures, and we discover that incarnations developed in the same manner as did animals. That is to say, we find the working of the Darwinian theory with regard to incarnations also. In the *Descent of Man,* Darwin wrote, "Man is descended from a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the old world. The quadrumana with all the higher mammals are probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal, and this through a long line of diversified forms either from some reptile-like or some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal." The animal forms, in which the first few incarnations appeared, were partial manifestations of *Bhagavan,* and their *Lilas* or actions were supernormal and non-human ; and they do not satisfy our criterion of *Avatar,* namely, the assumption of the human limitation by the Divine and the temporary submergence of the Divine in the human for the fullest enjoyment and manifestation of the bliss potency, as also for exemplifying how the human limitations can be conquered. Coming to Ramchandra, the Buddha, and Kalki, we find not the *Anandic* function of *Bhagavan* but His *Karmic* function, which is implied in *Sandhini Sakti*. Not to speak of Vamana, the dwarf-man, and Parashurama, the primitive man with his axe, Ramchandra and Buddha have performed no function other than the restoration of the disturbed equilibrium of *Prakriti* through their mentality and corporality as 'men'.

Hence, of all incarnations Sree Krishna and Chaitanya alone were the greatest recipients of the love of Vijaykrishna's heart, because Krishna and Chaitanya alone, of all the *Avatars,* were the most crystallised *Ananda.*

Vijaykrishna could have remained satisfied with Krishna alone, but his *Radhabhava* was the mighty force that led him on to Chaitanya. The *Braja-lila* is a pattern of various relationships (*Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya,* and *Madhura*) but the *Navadwipa-lila* is an uninterrupted stream of *Radhabhava.* In the *Braja-lila,* Sree Krishna was the *Asraya,* and the *Visaya* was in the relation of *Bhedabheda* to Him, so that the sublation of the difference between the subject and the object, which is at the basis of *Mahabhava,* could be only temporary and intermittent. But here in the *Navadwipa-lila,* there is only *Mahabhava* which is *Radhabhava* and nothing but that ; because Chaitanya was the *Visaya* and the *Asraya* combined into one, though it could not be an absolute merge. It was only the happy synthesis of the Absolute with the *Bhakta.* Again, as Vijaykrishna's love for God was love for the sake of Him alone, and never induced by any sense of His lordliness, the *Navadwipa-lila,* in which cannot be found a single instance of the exhibition of lordliness, gave him ample scope for plumbing the unfathomable depths of God's love.

He felt very different from what he had been before. We have seen that he had his quota of devotion to Chaitanya, but when at this time Chaitanya reappeared before him on the banks of the Jumna, his former reverence gave way to the soft tears of pure love. If, formerly at the name of Chaitanya, he felt within him an uplifted power, a power that quickens and inspires, fore-shadowing of his later faith, as the *Upanishadic* reference was of the *Avatarhood* of the *Gita.*

But when Vijaykrishna came to *Avatarhood,* not all *Avatars,* nor even those in human forms, could engage him as much as Chaitanya did. Descriptions of *Avatars* crowd the pages of the Hindu scriptures, and we discover that incarnations developed in the same manner as did animals. That is to say, we find the working of the Darwinian theory with regard to incarnations also. In the *Descent of Man,* Darwin wrote, "Man is descended from a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the old world. The quadrumana with all the higher mammals are probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal, and this through a long line of diversified forms either from some reptile-like or some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal." The animal forms, in which the first few incarnations appeared, were partial manifestations of *Bhagavan,* and their *Lilas* or actions were supernormal and non-human ; and they do not satisfy our criterion of *Avatar,* namely, the assumption of the human limitation by the Divine and the temporary submergence of the Divine in the human for the fullest enjoyment and manifestation of the bliss potency, as also for exemplifying how the human limitations can be conquered. Coming to Ramchandra, the Buddha, and Kalki, we find not the *Anandic* function of *Bhagavan* but His *Karmic* function, which is implied in *Sandhini Sakti.* Not to speak of Vamana, the dwarf-man, and Parashurama, the primitive man with his axe, Ramchandra and Buddha have performed no function other than the restoration of the disturbed equilibrium of *Prakriti* through their mentality and corporality as 'men'.

Hence, of all incarnations Sree Krishna and Chaitanya alone were the greatest recipients of the love of Vijaykrishna's heart, because Krishna and Chaitanya alone, of all the *Avatars,* were the most crystallised *Ananda*.

Vijaykrishna could have remained satisfied with Krishna alone, but his *Radhabhava* was the mighty force that led him on to Chaitanya.. The *Braja-lila* is a pattern of various relationships (*Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya,* and *Madhura*) but the *Navadwipa-lila* is an uninterrupted stream of *Radhabhava*. In the *Braja-lila,* Sree Krishna was the *Asraya,* and the *Visaya* was in the relation of *Bhedabheda* to Him, so that the sublation of the difference between the subject and the object, which is at the basis of *Mahabhava,* could be only temporary and intermittent. But here in the *Navadwipa-lila,* there is only *Mahabhava* which is *Radhabhava* and nothing but that ; because Chaitanya was the *Visaya* and the *Asraya* combined into one, though it could not be an absolute merge. It was only the happy synthesis of the Absolute with the *Bhakta*. Again, as Vijaykrishna's love for God was love for the sake of Him alone, and never induced by any sense of His lordliness, the *Navadwipa-lila,* in which cannot be found a single instance of the exhibition of lordliness, gave him ample scope for plumbing the unfathomable depths of God's love.

He felt very different from what he had been before. We have seen that he had his quota of devotion to Chaitanya, but when at this time Chaitanya reappeared before him on the banks of the Jumna, his former reverence gave way to the soft tears of pure love. If, formerly at the name of Chaitanya, he felt within him an uplifted power, a power that quickens and inspires, a force akin to that which throws the waters of the ocean up into tides, now, at the sight of Chaitanya, he trembled with exquisite emotion and, with tearful eyes, fell at His feet. The tide of emotion having abated a little, the Master begged Chaitanya to re-incarnate Himself once again for the sake of the hardened sinners of the modern world. Chaitanya then chanted the sweet name of Hari, which yields the positive good of *Prem-Bhakti,* not to speak of the extinction of miseries, or self-realization, or well-being which Aristotle calls Eudaimonia.

Vijaykrishna now travelled from place to place carrying the banner of Chaitanyaism, a minstrel of Hari. He undertook a pilgrimage to Brindaban. It was the same homesickness of the soul that drove Chaitanya to his pre-natal cradle. He stopped *en route* at Benares. Spiritual ecstasies seized the Master, whenever he entered the temple of Viswanath. When in the evenings he went to see the waving of lights in the temple, there was a huge throng. The Master wept and danced violently, mad after God. On such occasions tears spouted from his eyes, as water from a fountain. The Master's presence at the *Samkirtan* party, conducted by the learned theologian of Benares—Sree Krishnananda Swami, spread its contagion of *Bhakti* all around. People who had once been bewitched by his love-dance at the temple, daily came in bands to enquire when he would next be there. Bhaskarananda Swami, Visuddhananda Saraswati, Purnanda Swami, and other saints greatly rejoiced at his stay at Benares for a few days. From Benares he went to Ayodhya and then to Brindaban.

The Master's stay at Brindaban was a wondrous love-tale. He formed an acquaintance of a pious Vaisnava, Gour Shiromani, with whom he had frequent religious talks. The Master had nothing but severe contempt for those lay Vaishnavas that take female companions. These female companions, they argue, are their help-meets, as Beatrice was Dante's, for the culture of *Parakiya* love and for serving as reflection of self and for acquiring the nature of womanhood. Those grand ideals like 'Love grows by co-operation', '*Raganuga* is better than *Vaidhi*', are lost in their hands, and lust masquerades as love. But a lot of philosophy is here. We note the following sentence from *The Origin and Nature of Man* by S. B. McKinney:—"A man never knows himself until he sets up his body and mind for his own inspection and criticism." That self-surrender like that of a bride to the bridegroom, is an essential requisite, for, the dawning of love like the first sunrise streaks of lovely colour is also sought to be established by Comte: "In all kinds of force whether physical, intellectual, or practical, it is certain that man surpasses woman, but in the highest attributes of humanity woman are their superiors." But the crypto Buddhists and Shahajiyas generally revel in lust under false pretensions, and in this way in most cases, they have outraged the spirit of Chaitanya, which is one of stern Brahmanic asceticism. The real import of the exaltation of *Parakiya* love over *Svakiya* in Vaishnava Philosophy, means that love for God, in this form of personal relationship, ascends to the most serene and pellucid atmosphere, when the devotee loves God as a woman does her paramour. For, as Ellis has remarked in *The Psychology of Sex* (Vol. VI), "Love desires obstacles, mystery and stolen favours. Now, husbands and wives boldly avow their relationship, they possess each other without contradiction and without reserve. It cannot then be love that they experience."

When certain people speak of the immodesties arising from the Vaishnava creed and indulge in mud-baths of cynicism against them, they entirely lose sight of the sublime philosophy behind the *Parakiya* cult. Vijaykrishna knew to a nicety that it is the grossest mis-interpretation of the *Parakiya* cult that induces the lay *Vaishnavas* to adopt female partners, and that was why he entered into an animated discussion over the subject with Gour Shiromani. How the ascetic spirit of Sree Chaitanya, who rejected the company of Govinda Ghosh of Agradwip and Haridas the junior, worked upon Vijaykrishna, may also be seen from his non-admittance of women to his presence at this time. He never looked a woman in the face for a very long period. Even his female disciples could not approach him, they had to sit behind a screen. Once a woman (*Vaishnavi*) was pestered with requests from all sides to adopt a male companion. Vijaykrishna saved her from the clutches of the wicked people by advising her to remain firm at all costs. While he was at Brindaban, his elder brother's wife came to him and asked him certain questions. Vijaykrishna could not recognize her and talked to her as to a stranger. The relation took this to heart. Later on, when Vijaykrishna came to know that she was Brajagopal's wife, he begged her pardon, saying that he could not recognize her, because he had never seen her face.

Other things in Chaitanya's Religion of Man, were also grossly misunderstood by the Post-Chaitanya movement. The *Vaishnavas* worship the Eternal Man, and God as Man alone has the highest aesthetic appeal for them. From this Post-Chaitanya *Vaishnavism* has deduced that Man is superior to God. This is in the spirit of Comte, who says—"The Conception of God will be entirely superseded." "Towards Humanity, who is for us the only true Great Being, we the conscious elements of whom she is composed, shall henceforth direct every aspect of our life, individual or collective. Our thoughts will be devoted to the knowledge of Humanity, our affections to her love, our actions to her service." Tukaram, the great South Indian saint, exclaimed, "Know this, O God, that because we exist, God-head has been conferred on you." (*The Hindu View of Life* by Radha Krishnan) Chandidas is said to have observed, "Man represents the highest truth, nothing is higher than he." God thus faded away before man. As against the *Sahajiya* and Positivist conception of humanity, we have the criticism of Tolstoy: "The man who loves humanity, what is it that he loves? There is a state, there is a people, there is the abstract conception of man. But humanity as a concrete conception is impossible. Humanity? Where is its limit? Where does it end and where does it begin? . . . We do not know humanity in the concrete, nor can we fix its limits. Humanity is a fiction and cannot therefore be loved." With all its love for humanity, Chaitanyaism cannot brook the sight of man-worship in which God pales into insignificance before man. Vijaykrishna did not see how the worship of the human form of the Deity could degenerate into the cult of man-worship in the hands of the Sahajiyas. Man is always man, and the ideal *Sahaja* men are but hypostases of God and can never supersede God. Saturate with the spirit of Chaitanya, Vijaykrishna loved humanity as an emanation from the All-pervading Being and never in the *Sahajiya* or Positivist spirit of the deification of humanity. Ever he retained the same spirit of opposition to man-worship that he evinced, when he made remonstrance against the followers of Keshav.

Vijaykrishna realized God as Man and God in Man and never Man become God.

One of the pre-requisites of *Bhakti* is humility, and Vijaykrishna, with his natural passion of *Bhakti,* had been imbued from the beginning with the noble spirit of humility. Humility as a message of Chaitanya we find in the *Siksha-Astaka* (in Sanskrit), which was the only written document Chaitanya gave the world. "Humbler than the grass, more patient than a tree, honouring others yet without any feeling of honour for one's own self ; such a one is ever worthy to chant the name of Krishna." On the eve of his pilgrimage to Brindaban, Vijaykrishna fell at the feet of a scavenger and humbly asked for his blessings. While at Brindaban, he said to a scavenger-woman, "O Mother, you are so full of affection for me. What shall I give you? How shall I reward you? I have preserved some sacred *prasad* for you. Oblige me by accepting it." At this the woman burst into tears. At Brindaban, the orthodox *Vaishnavas* began to think ill of him and ridicule him with sardonic smile for his wearing the *Rudraksha Mala* and the saffron robe ; they also criticised him for his reverent study of the religious books of Guru Nanak ; Vijaykrishna only pointed out to them that they were not, in any way, opposed to the *Bhakti* catechism, and that they were recommended by that great work on rituals—*Hari-bhaktibilas*—the *magnum opus* of Sanatan.

We know that the heart of Chaitanyaism lay in the musical worship that goes by the name of *Samkirtan.* This was merely a revivalist movement, but Chaitanya made of it a new thing, 'whence he blew soul-animating strains'. At first the *Samkirtan* performances of Chaitanya were confined to the courtyard of Sreebas. The *Chaitanya*

Bhagavat tells us that a confraternity of about forty men, of whom Chaitanya, Nityananda, Adwaita, Gadadhar, Narahari, Bakreswar, Gangadas, Govinda Ghosh, Vasudev, Murari Gupta, and Haridas figured most prominently, assembled every night in the courtyard of Sreebas, and sometimes in that of Bakreswar to sing the name of Hari in a quorum. Chaitanya imparted certain fine musical touches to the *Manoharsai,* which had a certain harshness, when it first originated in the *paragana* of the same name in the district of Burdwan. The songs of Jaydeva, Chandidas, and Vidyapati, which occupy a very high place in the hymnology of the sect, were also sung. The outsiders were given no access to this fellowship, and it has been said that one night Gangadas, who was in charge of keeping the gates of the house during these nightly sessions, refused admittance to a Brahmin ; in consequence of this the Brahmin became highly incensed and the following morning pronounced a severe curse on Chaitanya on the banks of the Ganges. The Brahmin did not see that Chaitanya had formed a select body only to prepare them for the wonderful propagating work that was to follow. Their founts of religiousness being nourished by this emotionalism, Chaitanya saw enough possibilities in them, and the desire to carry the banner of *Vaishnavism* to the door-way of every home, worked within him with a tremendous intensity. The streets of Nadia as of all places he visited, became resonant with *Vaishnava* music and musical appurtenances ; and with a sweeping rapidity, the entire Nadia became *Vaishnava.*

After the two centuries of the *Sakta* revival and the decline of *Vaishnavism,* Chaitanyaism regained its halcyon days in the eighties of the last century, when some elements of Chaitanya's *Bhakti* were introduced into the Brahmo

Samaj. We have seen that even at its first appearance, this emotional felicity put itself to the fore ; it did so because of the sharp contrast it at once presented to the cold and uninviting rationalism and anti-idolatrous abstractions of the Samaj. But the deepening of feeling and the voicing of the heart's warm experience in the *Samkirtan* parties conducted by Vijaykrishna, came as he passed more and more to the pure emotionalism of Chaitanya from the mixture of the intuitional and the devotional in his starting religion. Fikir Chand in the East Bengal Brahmo Samaj had indeed created a madness, but even then Vijaykrishna had no cognizance of the best of Chaitanya's messages that, in the *Kali Yuga, Nama-kirtan* is equivalent to Krishna-worship. Now, through the *Sakhi* attitude after the attainment of the *Siddha* body, the *Raja-tattva* or the royal doctrine was realized by him, and if, formerly, the Mother as the symbol of the Loving God, swept him into a most maddening ardour of the soul, at this time Radha, the most fitting symbol of *Raganuga* love, the typification of the free worship to Krishna, carried him out of himself. From the twilight of the soul, the meeting of the conscious and the unconscious, like that of light and dark in the phenomenal world, he now mounted up to the blessed height, in which in the role of the *Gopi* he enjoyed the pleasure of *Rasa*. At this time, Nityananda, who was to Chaitanya what St. Paul was to Christ, joined the *Kirtan* party. And the Master actually saw him giving himself to the abandon of dancing in the form of an *Abadhuta*. Prior to his starting for Brindaban, Vijaykrishna was desired by Ramkrishna to attend one night a dramatic performance, in which Girish Ghosh was a star performer. As the Master saw *Chaitanya-lila* on the stage, he was in a transport of emotion. His love and dance infected all. Vijaykrishna with his fair-complexioned lustrous body, raised arms, and sapphire cheeks, now dancing, now roaring, and the next moment trembling like a leaf, wet all over with tears, now commanded the theatre-house. The performance having ended, Amrita Lal Basu, the manager of the theatre-house, approached the Master and told him that it was for him that they were able to enjoy that night a drop of that ocean of delight which is Chaitanya. It would be a sad mistake to confuse this emotionalism with that orgy of religious excitement called *Bailpara* in our part of the country.

The *Vaishnavic* trance is an exquisite poetic madness ; it is the real visitation of the divinity in man. The Mother-Cult, with all its implications of a helpless dependence on a compassionate Deity, cannot stir the depths of the dark reservoir of the soul so much, as this love of God, in the spirit of a maiden, can. Whatever landmark in the spiritual history of his life, the advance to the Motherhood of God might have constituted, he as a worshipper of the Mother could not certainly remain steeped in *Lila* nor could hear the Voice of God in the dark whispers of the air, playing through the withered flowers and rustling leaves, or spot out in *Samadhi* the black sheep in the fold that marred a *Kirtan*. In this, he followed the spirit of Chaitanya, although he did not refuse access to the outsiders, as did He, when in the courtyards of Sreebas and Chandra Sekhar. Following again the example of Chaitanya, he sang only the name of Hari in the *Nagar-Kirtan* and the *padas* in the courtyard of Gandaria *Asram*, or in the inner appartments of the houses he happened to live in.

An inexplicable longing, an unknown want, characterized Vijaykrishna's one year's stay at Brindaban. In so far as this is true, his life at Brindaban bears the hall-mark of the spirit of Chaitanya. This longing of love we often describe as homesickness of the spirit, in the absence of a better and more expressive term. This homesickness brings one to the river of life flowing 'fast by the oracle of God'. Unless one can hear at morn and sunset the sprightly footfalls of the joyous maidens, hurrying to the banks of the Kalindi, and hear the splashing of water and the jingle of bracelets, or unless one is seized with a lively fear at the mystic sight of their unbodied forms, clasping a flower-tree taking it for their sly absent lover, one's life at Brindaban will be an Egypt without a Nile. Through the special grace of Sree Radha, Vijaykrishna could raise with trembling hands a fringe of the deep dark screen of five thousand years, and have a sight of the luminous ever-green world beyond it. Vijaykrishna indeed looked beautiful, when as a *Yogin* he mastered the thinking principle, the modifications of which are the cause of all our mental distractions, just as the smiling sea looks beautiful, when in its sleeping tranquility. But he looked far more beautiful under his storm of love, like the ocean in a tempest, when deep calls unto deep, and breathless Nature presents a scene, than which nothing can be more magnificent or sublime. Nobody can say what Vijaykrishna felt at this time, what unseen thought caused those mystic vibrations of the spirit within him. Perhaps he could hear the flute 'that makes the Heavens be mute' or could see Radha and Krishna, pointing to the pale Moon 'with one bright star within the nether-tip', peeping from behind the shaggy hills on the banks of the gurgling Jumna. At this time Vijaykrishna exclaimed off and on—"Blessed Thou art, O Radha, Victory to Thee." Perhaps for him 'the wave of phantom time withdrew' and 'that one drop of beauty left behind from all the flowing of that tide' was felt by him to be still there, 'looking with the self-same eyes'. Without the singular grace of Sree Radha, no devotee can ever feel like that. When 'the rain poured down from one black cloud', Sree Radha saw Her Lover soaking the terraqueous globe with the refreshing showers of His nectarean *Lila*. As Vijaykrishna meditated on this as also on Her pining visions and heart-breaking sorrows during the absence of Krishna, that inexhaustible stream of eternal servitude and love which is Sree Radha, seemed to carry him gaily along, and he lost himself. That is why the *Vaishnava* apologist calls this *Lila* eternal. The *Bhakta* of Vijaykrishna's stamp, for whom the *Aprakrita* Brindaban lives, can feel, in his strange meeting of dream and wakefulness, how intense was Sree Radha's *Viraha,* out of what throe of the heart came those wringing sobs, how after the clouds and the dark night the bewitching moon-light streamed in, and there was the *Rasa*-dance.

Vijaykrishna realized that the trees and creepers of Brindaban were not what they were to the eyes of the mortals ; they were really saints, and it was 'love shackled with vain-loving' that had led them to take their births as flowering shrubs to adorn the neck of Krishna and kiss the dust of His feet. Although we often hear that there is no logic in the affairs of the heart, yet Pascal truly observes, the heart has reasons which reason does not know. It would seem a sacrilege to the devotee that proceeds through faith to allow reason to tear asunder the preternatural mist that enshrouds *Brindaban-lila,* and yet Brindaban is not a vast Pan, but everything here is in its place like things in the planned cities of the modern world. And even the actions of the Transcendent Sporter and His eternal associates do not stand outside the bounds of reason. The love-embrace of a tree by a *Gopi* is not the wild delirium of Amy Robsart in the Castle of Kenilworth, who flung her arms round the neck of the blackguard, Michael Lambourne, mistaking him for Leicester. The *Gopis* clasped the tree, because they actually saw Krishna, who is *Paramatma,* everywhere and in every object. They saw even their own husbands in Krishna, Who is God Himself, the evolute and merge of the vast universe. They could see Krishna in their husbands and their husbands in Krishna, because they were all *Siddha Mahapurushas,* incarnations of the unbounded Energy of God Himself. It is not illogical to think that, *Prem-Bhakti* being the *summum bonum,* however much it may be derided by the 'scholar', carrying his load of learning on his back, the attainer of bonums in the shape of *Moksha* should prefer plant life in Brindaban to a pleasurable state elsewhere, if that would make possible their enjoyment of the infinite sweetness of Sree Krishna's companionship. And if the *Vaishnava* apologist tells us that these plants and trees (*kalpa-tarus*) danced to the tune of Sree Krishna's flute and to the rhythmical movements of His feet, we have no reason to wonder at it. It is not merely the poet who has said that 'every flower enjoys the air it breathes', but the Scientists, with all their vaunt of exactitude and reason, have told us that mental phenomena are caused by stimuli in plants as in animals.

One day a *Samkirtan* party was led by some *Bhaktas* of Brindaban headed by Vijaykrishna, Gour Shiromani, Radhanath Goswami, Banamali Roy, and Nityananda Das Babaji. At that time, they were struck with wonder to notice the emotional ecstasy of a particular tree on the road-side. The warm radiance of the divine sentiment, working within the tree, showed itself in its fragrant breaths and the quick rhythmic movements of its boughs, as the rapt Master wended his way dancing. *Samkirtan* was Vijaykrishna's delight and touched him intensely. One day while he was at the bath-room, he was so enraptured by a *Kirtan* performance in the streets that he at once rushed out, forgetting to have his wash. An unexpected delight, vague and immense, possessed all, and the Master's love and dance rose like incense. There was set up a great din. When the *Kirtan* was over, he suddenly came to himself and became extremely sorry for what he had done. It is Love alone that can cause this self-forgetfulness, this illusion of music, and can make those absurdly simple songs distil their richest significance. It is Love alone that can translate our thoughts to the star-land in the vast and vague heavens. The eyes of a true lover are now full of pain and the next moment are full of joy ; now he is a futile derelict shrivelled and withered, and after a while he is on the borderland of Youth of Golden Dreams, startled by the pipings of the love's flute and the sudden whiff of the summer breeze, that has blown over the tuberose, the jasmine, and the chrysanthemum. If love for a finite mortal, in the shape of wifehood and motherhood, can make us heirs to an unclouded felicity, if even the hearing of the heart-breaking cry of a bird for its mate under the yellow and sagging moon, can altogether change a Whiteman, how infinite must have been the felicity of Vijaykrishna with its connotation of pleasant pain, when, in the intensity of the *Gopi's* longing for Krishna, he made of his heart a rosy sanctuary with 'a bright torch, casement ope at night, to let the warm Love in'! This is what the Westerners call the marriage with God.

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Vijaykrishna now undertook a woodland travel, thinking that it would open up for him greater opportunities for watching the *Lilas* of Krishna. In this also he had the guidance of the spirit of Chaitanya. As he set out, the Master recalled how four hundred years ago Chaitanya, with his sole Brahmin companion, had set out to see the woods. In these forests of *Braja-Mandal*, Sree Krishna had his pastorals in the company of the shephered boys, who were bound to him in the closest ties of comradery. These are 'Elysian regions, where we are to meet with nothing but joy, and plenty, and contentment ; where every gale whispers pleasure, and every shade promises repose'. In these woodlands of shimmering green and dancing flowers and changing moons, there is naught to be done, save to love and be loved, to sit and

"Flower-lulled in sleepy grass
Hear the cool-waves of hours pass
Although the centuries blend and blur".

From Brindaban he came to Muttra and visited *Bhuteswar Mahadev,* Sree Krishna's birth shrine, *Dhruba-tila, Visram Ghat, Dirgha-Vishnu, Mahavidya, Gokarna,* and other holy places. The next day he visited the *Madhu*-forest, the *Tal*-forest, the *Kumud,* the *Santanu-Kunda,* and the *Bahula,* accompanied by Benimadhav Panda and late Satish Mukhopadhyay. At *Radha-Kunda* Devi Yoga-Maya and a devoted disciple of the Master, Sreedhar Ghosh, joined him. As Vijaykrishna proceeded, the peacocks began to strut before him, the parrots flew from branch to branch to express their joyousness, the cows bellowed, and the trees shed honey. From time to time such ejaculations escaped his lips as—"Blessed Thou art, O Radha, Victory to Thee." The sacred Radha-pool, on the banks of which Sree Krishna had his *Rasa* dance, threw him in a rapture that lasted long. Next he visited the places where Raghunathdas Goswami lived, and Krishna Das Kabiraj wrote his great work, which we may call the last work on *Vaisnava* Philosophy —*Sree Chaitanya-Charitamrita*. Then he came to the *Suman* tank, and was delighted to see Govardhan hill, which Krishna held in His hands—the very Krishna, who in the company of the shepherd boys, played the horse and pranced with His feet, and then being promoted to a cow-boy, returned with His cattle at sun-set, when the clouds were rifted in the west, and there was the ring-dance of myriads of dust in the air. Starting from Kusum Lake, Vijaykrishna went round Govardhan hill. After that he arrived at Govinda-Kunda, where Madhavendra Puri had set up the temple of Gopal. It has been said that Gopal descended from the hill to present Himself before Sree Chaitanya, who would not set foot upon the sacred hill. Rup and his disciples enjoyed the company of Gopal in the Vithaleswar temple at Muttra, to which He had taken refuge for a month. The Master's heart brimmed over with love, as he heard an indescribable unearthly music issuing from the recesses of the *Kamya* Forest.

The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

Before he came to the *Kamya* Forest, Vijaykrishna visited several other sacred places ; such as, *Manas Ganga, Yasoda-Kunda, Hardevji, Sakshi-Gopal, Rup-Lake,* and *Alak-Ganga*. Thence he arrived at *Lukluki Kunda, Charan-hill, Kadam-Khandi* and *Kaliya-Lake*. In all these places, he passed his time in dancing and in singing Krishna's exploits. Vijaykrishna completed his auspicious wood-land travel and returned to Brindaban, passing swiftly through a series of places:—*Nanda-Ghat, Ram-Ghat, Balaram-Kunda, Pani-gram,* the *Bel*-forest, the *Lauhaban,* the *Mahaban,* the *Bhandir* wood, and *Gokul.* What a feast of joy Vijaykrishna must have enjoyed in that amphitheatre of woodland scenes! It is only an apostle of *Bhakti* like him that can hear the Song of the Flute, still reverberating in the woods, with his cultured mysticism and tender emotions.

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Another thing, which marks Vijaykrishna's closest affinity with Chaitanya, was his preaching of *Nama-Brahman.* To the *Vaishnavas,* the *Nama* and the *Namin* are identical. The *Saktas* and the *Saivas,* in a like manner, emphasise the identity of the *Mantra* and the *Devata.* In *Tantra Sadhan,* the *Mantras* occupy the position of the same importance as the sacrifices do in the Vedic method, and the hymns, in the *Pauranic ;* when the *Chetan* embodied in the *Mantra,* or, in other words, the illumination latent in the *Mantra,* is awakened, the *Mantra* reveals its eternity, and the identity of the *Mantra* with the *Devata* is realized. The *Mantra* has the same connection with the *Devata* as the *Sabda* has with the *Artha,* the Logos with the Real. Like the *Mantra* of the *Tantras,* the *Naam* of the *Vaishnava* Philosophy is the nearest and most expressive symbol of God. To it is joined the *Om,* the seed of the macrocosm. *Brahman* or *Hiranyagarbha* first manifested Himself as Name, and this Name-word is the eternal and inexpressible *Sphota.* Just as in the human microcosm or the limited *Mahat,* the mind-stuff stands for the Name, and the body for the

Form, so in the macrocosm or the unlimited *Mahat,* the *Sphota* is the Name, and the entire sensible universe is the Form. The nearest possible symbol in the *Sphota* is the *Om*. The *Om* has the same relation to the universe, as the idea has to the word. While the word and the thought are bound up inextricably, there may be various word-symbols for the same thought. But there cannot be another word-symbol which may be an apt substitute for this *Om*. The *Om* symbolises the *Sphota* most and particularises it the least. The *Om* is the combination of the three sounds—*A, U, M*. The Teacher of the *Gita* says, "I am *A* among the letters." *A* is the throat-sound, *M* is the last-lip-sound. In pronouncing *U* the back of the tongue is raised towards the back or soft palate, and then the lips are rounded. So *U* "exactly represents the rolling forward of the impulse which begins at the root of the tongue, till it ends in the lips." Therefore, *Om* or *Aum,* the first manifester of *Brahman,* is the representative of the entire phenomenon of sound-production. All sounds are comprehended in it.

Nama-Brahman is the sacred name of *Hari* with His generalised symbol *Om* added to it. The worship of *Nama-Brahman,* as identical with God Himself, was begun by Sree Chaitanya, but it was Vijaykrishna, who made it widespread. In thus giving currency to the worship of *Nama-Brahman* among the multitude, Vijaykrishna declared himself to be in a state of pupilage to Chaitanyaism ; and Sree Chaitanya Himself, when he met Him on the banks of the Jumna, instructed him,—"*Hari's* name, *Hari's* name, *Hari's* name alone ; in the *Kali Yuga* there is no other means of salvation, no other, indeed, no other !" In this Age, mere chanting the name of *Hari,* which is a most unritualistic practice, is sufficient, nay, it is *the* means available to those desirous of salvation. This *Nama-Brahman* as a divine message was sent to him by Nityananda also ; and the *Sloka* was seen by the Master, written by the unseen hand of the Artist on the face of the sky in glowing letters. When *Nama* is meditated upon with every inhalation and exhalation of breath, it reaches the Throne of God like a telegraphic message. No amount of elaborate ceremonial observances, nor severe asceticism, at the sacrifice of all the worldly prospects and emoluments of life, which the *Yoga*-system demands, can command so much strength, as the one single utterance of the holy name can.

One day at Brindaban, Vijaykrishna was walking along the banks of the Jumna ; at that time a mound over the grave of a saint was found to have crumbled away for the most part, and on search, however, there was obtained a bone which had the *Harinama Mantra* (16 names and 32 letters), written on it in fine *Devanagri* characters:—

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,
Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare,
Hare Rama, Hare Rama,
Rama, Rama, Hare Hare.

Vijaykrishna knew that the names on it were a genuine record of the perpetual prayerfulness of the long deceased saint. Had the *Nama* been an arbitrary sign to designate Godhead, this most astounding thing would have been impossible. The vibrations in the *Nama* deeply thrill the entire physique, and the blood that circulates in the system, keeps time to the rhythmic sound, the *Nama*, and even the bones that are nourished and sustained by the blood, get the stamp of the Divine Name. To Vijaykrishna the continued flow of meditation on the *Nama* with a healthy breath-control, that becomes habitual, was the goal. He spoke again and again that, when the regulation of the breath, that vitally affects the Primal Energy, and, therefore, the mind, with which it has such a close connection, is achieved, and a stage is reached, at which *Pranayam* is not consciously practised, but becomes automatic and spontaneous, or, in other words, when every respiratory process is so regulated as a natural result of long habit as to constitute unconsciously this *Pranayam,* to which *Nama* alone gives its meaning, the *Sadhaka* lies in absolute divine immateriality, *i.e. Suddha Bhagavati Tanu* is gained. At this time, an indescribably soft music is produced within the body of the *Sadhaka,* just below the forehead, and that music draws the snake ; and *Siva,* the greatest *Sadhaka,* eternally meditating on *Narayana,* is pictured with the snake whistling over His forehead, keeping time, as it were, to that music. The same reason accounts for the frequent appearance of the snake on Vijaykrishna's body.

The mode of *Nama-Sadhan,* adopted by Vijaykrishna, is called in the Shastric language *Ajapa-Sadhan.* This removes Vijaykrishna off the track of Bengal *Vaishnavism.* The Bengal *Vaishnavas* repeat loudly the name of Krishna, and not meditate on it, and even when they use the *Tulasi* beads of their rosary, which is like a prayer-wheel and the use of which is very much like the Roman Catholic rosary, their *Nama-Sadhan* is not a mental process, but *Nama-kirtan* or physical utterance. Vijaykrishna's disciples as well as the outsiders greatly wondered as the divine names as well as images were found to appear on his holy person from time to time. After a while these names and images were found to be obliterated. Although lay persons looked upon this phenomenon in the light of a miracle, those who had eyes to see, knew at once that it was but a visible outer expression of the silent inward process. It was the same as the presence of divine names on the leaves and barks of the trees of Brindaban, which were really God-inspired saints in disguise.

Vijaykrishna repeatedly said that no force is capable of battering down the bulwarks of our faith, so long as our individual mind lies in *Nama ;* and when there is a lull in meditation, Satan, who is ever-active to gull men into his trap with a fatal facility, finds his time. Narayan Swami, who had made a name for himself by his nefarious practices, found all his strength slipping between his fingers, when he had to deal with Vijaykrishna. Narayan Swami told Vijaykrishna that he would be able to present before him the image of Vishnu at any moment. This whetted the curiosity of Vijaykrishna. He went to Narayan Swami at the appointed time, extremely eager to know how this most ordinary man could have so much native influence upon God, Whose whereabouts the greatest of saints that transcend and overtop all, are unable to know even in their *Nirvikalpa Samadhi,* when the "happy finders" are yet like Abraham, who journeyed from Ur not knowing whither he was bound. Vijaykrishna sat down in meditation, feeding on the *manna* of the divine name, with his mind tensely strung for seeing Vishnu. He was greatly surprised, when Narayan Swami asked him to desist from meditation for some time, but he could not do so, as the *Nama* had become the very essence of his being. Narayan Swami conjured up a dazzling image of Vishnu. Vijaykrishna remained sitting stock-still, the vision gave him no joy, no "at home" feeling in his soul, and he was wondering how the vision of *Bhagavan* could leave him so cold—*Bhagavan,* the single utterance of whose name calls forth a new dawn, a day star in the horizon of our lives. To find a living and convincing way to the heart of the mystery, Vijaykrishna began to meditate intensely on the name of *Hari*, and immediately the image of Vishnu was transformed into a deadly spectre, squeaking and gibbering in a peculiar nasal intonation. The saintly garb of Narayan Swami now dropped off, and he appeared in the light of a wizard, a furtive magician, that hectors people by making the spirit at his command assume the form of Vishnu, by virtue of his mummery or jargon. It is for this that Vijaykrishna emphasised, at all times, the divine name as the sole weapon to ward off enormous odds in the gladiatorial amphitheatre of life.

From Brindaban Vijaykrishna desired to go to Hardwar to attend the bathing ceremony called the *Kumbha Mela,* the Congress of the Sadhus. Meanwhile, Yoga Maya Devi, who was a queen among women, in her uttermost devotion and pristine purity, gave up her ghost on the thirteenth day of the moon in the month of Magh at Brindaban. After her last ceremony was over, Vijaykrishna went to Hardwar in the following month in 1297 B.S. A piece of bone of Yoga Maya Devi's body was then thrown into the *Brahma-Kunda* at Hardwar by her son Yoga-jivan Goswami. Vijaykrishna stayed there for some time, enjoying the vast assembly of the *Sadhus*. He then came to Dacca with his disciples and lived at the Gandaria *Asram*. Subsequently, a little temple was erected there on some bones of Yoga Maya Debi's body. Vijaykrishna himself arranged for the worship of *Nama-Brahman* in that temple in Aswin, 1298 B.S. He was the exemplar, the path-finder for his disciples, for whom *Nama-Brahman* was to be the essential part of their individual worship. He once advised a Brahmo friend of his to meditate on the *Om,* for *"Tasya vachakah pranavah"*. In *Mund,* we have "Meditate on the Self as *Om.*" In *Vrh,* "Let a man meditate on the Self as only His word." *Nama-Brahman* as God Himself is propitiated by *Bhakti* alone ; an elaborate apparatus of worship, rituals, and litanies are not needed here. Not Ishamael but Isaac the free son is our ideal. The devotee that worships *Nama-Brahman,* must worship Him spiritually and most sincerely, and it is only then that he turns out an Isaac.

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From Dacca Vijaykrishna went to Santipur to see his mother. It seemed as though the affectionate mother was expectantly awaiting his arrival, and the son came answering to her call. The son redolent with the fragrance of love and devotion, fell at her feet. About that time was celebrated at Santipur the famous *Rasa-jatra* in commemoration of Krishna. *Rasa* dance, which, as we have already observed, was the synthesis of the first four emotions with the fifth (*Madhura*). It is one of the greatest festivals of the Chaitanya sect. This *Vaishnava mela* furnished Vijaykrishna, who was ever aching for the sports of Krishna through the life of the *Gopi,* with an unparalleled opportunity to meditate on that love-enactment. Although the ideal aim of the *Bhakta,* this drama of intense life-devotion has ever remained a mystery to the uninitiated, for it took place behind the screen set up by *Yoga-maya,* 'the great Principle that bridges the gulf between life and no-life'. Vijaykrishna went from temple to temple to see the images of Radha and Krishna, arrayed for that drama of their intense life-devotion called *Rasa.* As Vijaykrishna looked at the image of Shyam Sundar, the tutelary God of his own household, silent tears of love ran down his cheeks, and in the fervour of emotion, the Master's golden form waved to and fro, just as a creeper full of soft greenness is gracefully shaken by the south breeze, emerging out of the moonlit depth of the night.

Nilkantha, the famous *Kirtaniya* (head-man of a *Kirtan* party) came on the occasion and flooded the entire Santipur with the melody during the three nights of the *Rasa-jatra*. As Vijaykrishna heard his songs and witnessed the *Jatra,* the eight kinds of of tender emotions (*Ashta Sattvik Bikar*) became manifest in him. The eight sorts of emotion are no madness ; they stand to reason and lend themselves to a scientific explanation. The *Kirtan* party sang and danced very energetically, but as certain uncultured outsiders denounced it as an unmeaning confusion, a noisy babel, and laughed at the dancers in their religious somersaults, the headman of the party stopped the performance, thereby recalling the spirit of Chaitanya, who, with the same object of keeping the intense group stimulus of his chosen body, his choral union (in the language of the Westerners) uninfected, engaged Gangadás to police the courtyards of Sreebas. It is only a *Bhakta* that can know what a *Kirtan* is,—a *Bhakta* like Sreebas, who could dance and sing in the *Kirtan,* with the most unrestricted emotion, in spite of the death of his son, as though nothing had happened.

Vijaykrishna next went to Calcutta and resided for a few days at Masjidbari Street. The news of the sudden illness of Basanta Kumari Devi, wife of Yoga-jiban Goswami, brought him to Dacca. Basanta Kumari Devi, who was a high-souled woman, expired soon after. It was about this time that Vijaykrishna's mother, Swarnamayee Devi, also died. As Vijaykrishna was a Sannyasin, the funeral rites were performed by Yoga-jiban on the banks of the Ganges. Vijaykrishna arranged for the *Kirtan* of

Mukunda Das. Within the circle of singers Vijaykrishna chanted the *Harinama Mantra* with full-hearted emotion and exclaimed, "O Son of Sachi, Victory to Thee. All Hail O Son of Padmabati, all fears have ceased for you, O man, Chant the name of *Hari,* it will fetch thee salvation."

The Master next went to Prayag with his disciples for bathing at the holy confluence during the Sun's progress through Capricorn. This place was more to him than a holy place. It was here that the meeting of Sree Chaitanya and Rup Goswami took place. Vijaykrishna stayed at Prayag for a whole month. This is known as *Kalpa-vasa.* Since it is considered to be of great religious merit, not to speak of ascetics and religious men, even the trousered damsels of the Punjab and the Ooriya women with three rings in their nose, go there, with the earnestness of the migrating bird, for taking to this *Kalpa-vasa* in the *Tirtharaj* Prayag. There was that year a tremendous rush, and the *Mela*-ground, seething with teeming millions and endless procession of religious orders called *Akharas,* presented a most magnificent sight ; and as soon as the *Mela* was over, the entire ground was swept clean, as if by magic, of the innumerable straw huts, with which it seemed as full as ever a while ago, and the buzz of the millions and the dismal blare of the Sadhu's conch, that filled the sky during the great *Mela* days, ceased at once leaving a dead silence behind.

When Vijaykrishna appeared dancing at the *Mela* site with his disciples following him at his heels, and singing loudly the *Harinama,* the infinite sweetness of his *Kirtan* overpowered all, and everybody wondered at this joyful abandon and fervour of love. The *Sadhus* came in merry groups, and in lowly obeisance, threw themselves at his feet, and the crowd simply became unmanageable.

At that moment a comparatively short-statured *Sannyasi*, with scalding tears, running from his eyes like the Ganges stream, and with a glow at once vital and transforming, appeared before him and drew him tightly to his bosom saying, "Come, thou art my very life." On his disappearance, Vijaykrishna said to his disciples, "This is my Gurudev, Brahmananda Paramahamsaji. This day he has graced you all with his divine vision." Dinakar Rao Bahadur, sometime minister of the Gwalior State, set up a big camp on the *Mela* ground for accommodating Vijaykrishna and his followers. From the door of the camp was hung a board with the *Harinama Mantra* wrtten on it, and within the camp were installed the images of Gouranga and Nityananda, and every morning and evening there were the waving of lights, circumambulation, and great feats of *Kirtan*. Every day for hearing the excellent Vaishnava music from the lusty throats of some forty Bengali *Bhaktas*, many Sadhus came to his camp. When in the morning or in the evening, Vijaykrishna went out to see the Sadhus, the bystanders, in their intense delight of gazing, uttered sweetly the name of *Hari*, and his magnetic personality won all, even the *Nagas* and *Adwaitists* and Phenomenalists, to whom Chaitanyaism is an anathema, and also those narrow sectarians with their obloquies upon him for being in some respects out of line with the ideals of the Vaishnava order, that were taken as standard. They did not at first see why Vijaykrishna should wear both the *Tulasi* and the *Rudraksha Mala*, and the coloured cloth, though, to all intents and purposes, he appeared with the singular Vaishnava piety. Now they realized their mistake and came to him, batch after batch, and accorded to him their spiritual leadership. They greatly marvelled, when they made the astounding discovery that Vijaykrishna remained sitting all day and night, sunk in meditation and *Bhava-Samadhi* and knew no sleep, not even a siesta. Ever since his first stay at Gandaria, Vijaykrishna had conquered sleep, and for the last few years of his life, he had never a wink of sleep.

Mahatma Kathiya Babaji said of him,—"This *Baba* has a most loving heart. His love is infinite." He could not put up with the slightest misunderstanding about Vijaykrishna and affirmed with a determined voice, "What do you say? Don't you see that there is the gleam of fire in his forehead? Can you remain in the same sitting posture night and day like him? Your body, in that case, would be torn to shreds." Whenever he happened to see him, Bhola Giri Maharaj addressed him as "My Asutosh", being frantic with love. Kathiya Baba, the junior came to him many times during the day, and at the end of the *Mela*, the parting throes were simply unbearable for him. He said of him, "Strange to say, I sometimes see in him *Ramaji* and sometimes *Ganesh.*" Mahatma Narsinha Das, better known as Pahari Baba, felt so much drawn towards him that he remarked, "I tell you this truth, our *Baba* is a body of infinite lustre, he is my *Ramji* in person." Mahatma Dayal Das was panting for a meeting with him long after the *Mela* and asked with great expectancy one of Vijaykrishna's disciples as to how he could meet him again. Mahatma Gambhirnath (Nathji of Gorakhpur) said, "Such a great *Bhakta* is a very rare phenomenon." The internal upheaval of the *Bakti*-emotion attained in him such a degree of astonishing visibility and transparency that the mere sight of him turned the mind of anybody that set out to find the Holy Grail. There was ever a heap of people round him like wasps round a jar of jam. Many

Sadhus came to him for obtaining *Premananda* from him, and he initiated them.

Mahatma Arjun Das, better known as Kshepa Chand, who as a *Yogin* had unmeted range, and a little bit of whose powers, if manifested, would be received by all with hush and awe, now found that he had so long lived on husks. Love alone now seemed to him to be the road to home. His sun, once so bright, now laboured for him pale and wan ; and instead of the proud noonday glare, he sought the fairy moon with her ever-charming face, the silver star of the evening, the ribbed sands on the Jumna hued with the golden sunset, the veil of darkness coming apace, and the *Kalpa-tarus* of Brindaban appearing like smudge of ink on a half-dark background, the silken sounds of birds skimming the Jumna, and the black waters playfully running away with a mischievous laughter and then hurrying with a mysterious voice of love to wash the rosy tender feet of Sree Radha. Although, occupying an unapproachably exalted position as a *Yogin*, Kshepa Chand was now dreaming, with swimming eyes, of the eternal Brindaban, and perhaps even the stars of the heavens now seemed to him to be the stops of the instrument, from which music would burst forth upon the hushed air of the flowery tranquil groves, shaking the tender hearts of the *Gopis*. He used to sit by the side of Vijaykrishna through the greater part of the day and chanted hymns importunately with folded hands to obtain through his infinite grace the inestimable boon of *Prema*, which Sree Chaitanya declared as the fifth and the greatest pursuit of humanity, in his discussions with Ramananda Roy on the banks of the Godavari in 1510 A.D. He was often seen to wave his hand gracefully before the Master, and nobody knew what mysterious push he felt within him, what joy, the achievement of the spirit, was his. He threw himself very frequently at the feet of the Master, who stood with superb majesty at the headquarters of Faith, and rubbed the dust of his feet all over his body. His feelings were beyond conception ; to a superficial observer, his movements bespoke nothing short of insanity. One day he washed the feet of many *Sadhus* in a little water, which truly indicated the negative state of mind proper to a noviciate in the new mode of discipline. As he was going to quaff it himself, Vijaykrishna expressed his wish to partake of it. Although standing head and shoulders above all those *Sadhus* that bowed to his feet, Vijaykrishna always liked that state of mind, in which one can condescend to the levels of life to be humble and full of reverence. There was at once an expression of conscious guilt in his looks, and with trembling hands he handed over the vessel containing the water to Vijaykrishna. He once said, "All my wishes are fulfilled at the mere sight of Thee, O Maharaj. Never have I seen such a *Mahatma* in all the great *Kumbha Melas* that I have attended." When a *Samkirtan* party, conducted by *Vijaykrishna,* proceeded through the *Mela* ground, Kshepa Chand sometimes put himself in the forefront and sometimes stood up in the rear in a most supplicating mood.

During the one month that Vijaykrishna stayed at the *Mela* ground, he presented large doles of money to all those *Sadhus* that prayed to him for help. The old Brahmo friends of Vijaykrishna, who wanted to foment a conspiracy and stir up the feelings of the *Sadhus* against him, served to enhance his glory all the more ; and Vijaykrishna became not only known to almost every *Sadhu* in that vast assembly, but became also the very centre of his thoughts, so to say. It is astonishing how Vijaykrishna could manage to feed the mouths of so many people in the camp and, over and above, practise so much charity. By imbibing the spirit of Chaitanya, who had withdrawn the name of Govinda Ghosh for storing up the remnant of *Haritaki* fruit, Vijaykrishna looked upon storing things for the morrow as grossest worldliness. From the time of his missionary activities for the Samaj, Vijaykrishna had nothing to live on, save the grace of God. In the *Mela* camp, he spent away most unhesitatingly whatever came into his hands as the gracious gift of God during the day. The unbelievers laughed in their sleeves at what they called the unthinking improvidence of the Master day after day. Invariably rich presents came from some quarters, and this benign dispensation seemed to those unbelievers to be next to miraculous. Every day in the camp, the morning routine was followed as usual; every heart seemed full, and nobody had time to give his thoughts to meals. And just before noon, after which Vijaykrishna never took his meals, offerings came to the joy of all, and the camp resounded with loud thanksgiving to the Bountiful Father, dispensing all affairs from above. For two days a particular gentleman brought presents for him. On the second day, Vijaykrishna asked him not to repeat this practice any more, for it was contrary to the law of *Sannyas*. At this unbelievers chuckled. There was the mist-wraith of doubts and fears before them. But the next day, just before noon, the Master and his disciples were invited to a *Mahotsab*, and they were all entertained most hospitably.

The *Mela* over, there took place the pathetic incident of leave-taking. To the eye-witnesses, the sweet pathos of the scene was unforgettable. One of the disciples of

Vijaykrishna asked him why he was weeping so much, and the *Sadhus* too seemed frantic with emotion, although they all stood outside the jurisdiction of *Maya*. The disciple was at once told that those tears were motivated not by *Maya*, but by love, and that separation from *Bhaktas* is always heart-rending. Vijaykrishna as well as these associates were no passive *Sadhus*, and by baptizing many *Sadhus* in the waters of *Bhakti*, Vijaykrishna helped to forward, in this *Kumbha Mela*, the dissemination of the great Gourangite message of *Bhakti*.

Vijaykrishna now started for Calcutta.

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From Calcutta Vijaykrishna went hurriedly to Navadwip, on the occasion of the birth-day *Mahotsab* of Sree Chaitanya. The full moon in the month of *Falgoon* (February and March), if attended with an eclipse, is regarded, in the religious books of the Hindus, as singularly auspicious. There was an eclipse on the fairest full moon night, on which Sree Chaitanya was born in the year 1407 of the Saka Era. This year the eclipse of the moon gave a special importance to the *Mahotsab*, and crowds of devotees poured in from all parts of the province. When the eclipse took place, Vijaykrishna had fits of devotional fainting. Perhaps he swooned away at the sweet recollection of the happy combination of circumstances, in which the Lion of Nadia took his birth. As he was pointing to the moon, he perhaps saw with tearful reddened eyes the form of the Beloved descending from Heaven. Perhaps he felt that Lord Gauranga was taking a second Avatarhood, and the people were chanting His name, not for the eclipse, but for the advent of the Lord, though unawares, as they had done on the ever-memorable Falguni night more than four centuries back. As the thought of Sree Chaitanya, that descended from the ambrosial ocean of love, wrapped him up like a warm cloak, the balmy lid of his mind gently closed over it, and there was *Samadhi*.

The Master's very presence in the *Samkirtan* parties drew a flood of emotion from the surcharged hearts of the *Bhaktas*. Such *Bhakti*, undiluted with the least particle of affectation, is a very healthy passion ; without it our hearts droop and close up like flowers at sunset. As Vijaykrishna ejaculated, "Glory to Thee, O Son of Sachee", he seemed to hear the love-roars of Sree Gouranga that had once shaken Navadwip. The *Bhaktas* loved to dive in the stream of love ; they forgot how to swim. The hairs on the comeliest person of the Master resembled the petals of the Kadamba flower. The ejaculations of the *Bhaktas*, such as "O Sachee's Darling", were the terse mystic utterances of the soul, setting the pitch, as it were, for the ascending lyrical strain. Such passionateness is born of the wondrous deliciousness of *Kevala Bhakti* and is impossible for one in the quietistic stage. Sadhu Haribolanand suddenly rushed towards Vijaykrishna, who again embraced him, and the two began a fine rhythmic dance. At this the hearts of the thousands of bystanders began to beat faster and faster with joy, the *emotion directrice* of love. It is only on such occasions that *Kirtan* achieves its purpose by re-orienting our spiritual energies, by keeping our faith, the presiding genius of religious emotion, and by chastening and transfiguring the self of our selves.

At the end of the eclipse, Vijaykrishna went to bathe in the Ganges, and the *Bhaktas* sprinkled water on his body. In the manifest Krishna-*lila*, the *Gopis* did the same, lapping the waters of the Jumna with the soft touches of their little hands. As Vijaykrishna was returning to his lodge after the bath, a certain fellow ran towards him, threatening to beat him. Strange to say, as the fellow appeared before the Master, he felt an electric shock as it were, stood transfixed for a moment, and then lay prostrate on the ground near the feet of his great conqueror. Rising up, he began to dance in an abandon of devotion.

Next day Vijaykrishna paid a visit to the *Hari-sabha* house, which is distinctly a product of *Vaishnavism* on its educational side. Having stayed there throughout the whole day, Vijaykrishna went to the *Mahaprabhu Bari* towards the latter part of the night to join the *Samkirtan,* which generally continues in that shrine all through the night on great festive occasions like the present. The *Kirtaniyas* sang by rotation, and one of them who was to begin his performance, asked for Vijaykrishna's blessings with folded hands. The *Kirtan* began with vehement vigour, and as Vijaykrishna danced, he pointed his finger to the wooden image of Gouranga, said to have been hewn by Vansidas out of the trunk of the *Nimba* tree, under which the Lord was born, and installed by Vishnupriya, His stricken wife. As the Master exclaimed, "Lo! there, there", it seemed as though the Master's whole body was made of love-stuff.

One day Vijaykrishna had a strange meeting with an old milk-woman. She was carrying a pail of milk. As she saw the Master and his associates, she looked at them with rapt admiration and then said in a sweet voice, "What has brought you all here? I see, you are all inmates of the Brinda-forest. It is for you that I have been roving all the while. My joy knows no bounds. I have at last found my quest." Then, in the attitude of Mother Yasoda, she poured her milk down their throats.

Another day Vijaykrishna went to see the image of

Nava-Gouranga in the house of late Mahendra Bhattacharjee. The image appeared to Vijaykrishna as the Lord Himself with the heart thumping against the ribs. The Lord communicated to the dearest devotee His wish for golden bells and a pair of bracelets. At once, there was an outflow of the Master's all-inclusive substantial devotion. Perhaps the fragrant breaths of the Lord intoxicated him, and these words escaped his lips:—"Pant no more. I shall ask him to secure for Thee the ornaments you desire."

Before leaving Navadwip, Vijaykrishna visited Sreebas's *Angeena* (courtyard), where Gouranga first manifested His Self with His first *Kirtan* party, and where Sreebas's grandson, Brindaban Das, wrote his great work, *Sree Chaitanya Bhagavat*. There the vicious system of *Bhet*, the chief source of the temple revenues, in sacred places like these, was very much disliked by Vijaykrishna, and he was exceedingly sorry to think that the temple-holder made the ownership of the image of Chaitanya, the friend of the poor, a profitable enterprise. Vijaykrishna also saw the famous old *Vaishnavi*, Rai Mataji, at her place. Overcome with delight, that Chaitanyaite nun recited many hymns in adoration to him as well as to Adwaita, the progenitor of the Chaitanya Movement. She was wild with joy and did not know how to entertain him. Vijaykrishna agreed to dine at her place, and she served him the food that she had consecrated to Sachi's darling. Rai Mataji represented the truest ideal of a Chaitanyaite *Vaishnava*, very much unlike those so-called *Vairaginis* that have introduced such unsavoury elements into Post-Chaitanyaism.

Vijaykrishna soon left Navadwip for Santipur. From Santipur he came to Calcutta and stayed at Sukea Street.

Here his daughter, Prem-Sakhi, breathed her last. Vijaykrishna remained wholly absorbed in reading the religious books and in reciting the Lord's name and heeded not the daughter's death, although the house resounded with an outburst of grief. At the ecstatic dance of the Master at the *Kirtan,* for which he then gave orders, his mother-in-law, Muktakeshi Devi, greeted him with an outburst of extreme annoyance: "You are so heartless. Does not the death of the poor daughter touch you in the least?" The pure flow of the Master's joy received no check, his mind took no taint, his dancing had the same accustomed vigour. He placed his right leg on the head of the dead body of the departed dear one for a minute. At that time the Master's body beamed with a heavenly gleam, and he was as joyous as ever. He gave vent to his feelings in these words:—"What should I do but congratulate my daughter on her best luck? The angels are now gathering round her in august assemblies. Should I cry when I ought to rejoice?"

Vijaykrishna next removed to Kambalitola at Shyambazar. There he was visited by Kshepa Chand. Kshepa Chand came on foot to Bengal to meet his "Gournacha Baba" (one dancing like Gouranga Himself). Kshepa Chand first came to Navadwip, but nobody could give him the whereabouts of his "Gournacha Baba". At last he came to Calcutta. Chance operated to his advantage, and one day he fell in with Vijaykrishna's own men whom he had seen at Allahabad. Kshepa Chand was always spoken of by Vijaykrishna as a wonderful man, and his *Sadhana,* along the lines of *Yoga,* which has individualistic perfection for its ideal aim. He gave him certain *Bibhutis,* namely, voluntary stoppage of all bodily movements, internal washings of the stomach, the bladder, and the urethra for the purification of the body, voluntary detachment of the body's spirit from the flesh, and travelling inconceivably long distances in spiritual body. Although the acquirements of such powers are no necessary appendage of a *Sadhaka* for the highest spiritual realization, yet, in *Vachaspati's Tika on Yoga-Sutras III*, we are told that they constitute the surest evidence of the infallibility of the *Yoga* system and act as spurs upon the *Sadhaka*. Now, for the supreme enjoyment of bliss, which is, however, not conflicting with asceticism, though at first sight the latter seems rather grim and forbidding, he wished not only for *Bhakti* but also for *Prema*. The collyrium of *Prema* must tinge the eye of *Bhakti*, if the vision of the Highest Lord is to be had. He said to Vijaykrishna, "Lord, lend me a hearing. I will have tangled locks like you. I will bear on my body the special marks of *Vaishnava* piety, and proclaim everywhere the name of Sree Chaitanya of Nadia. O, Make myself thine." Kshepa Chand felt to a nicety that love is not sentimentality, nor anæmic inactivity, but the most remedial and life-giving emotional experience that a man living the life of the spirit can aspire for. "God! Thou art Love! I build my faith on that." The wishing-tree conferred the boon. Ostensibly as a mad man, Kshepa Chand danced with the Master, but there was the revelation unto him of the Love-body of Cosmic and Super-cosmic Man. Some jealous Brahmo friends of Vijaykrishna somehow administered some poison to him at this time. Kshepa Chand, who knew how to control the involuntary muscles and who also acquired the ability to increase the power of resistance of the body, could help him considerably in counteracting the effects of the poison.

After this, Vijaykrishna again went to Brindaban with some of his disciples. He first stayed at Keshi Ghat, and then for about seven months, at Lui-bazar. Mayur Mukut Baba, a great *Yogin* of Manas Lake, came at this time to Brindaban, hankering after *Prema-Bhakti*. As he approached the Master, a wonderful impalpable power passed telepathically, as it were, into his soul, and from that time forward, he devoted himself most earnestly to feeding and fructifying 'the new life' by casting away his high *Yogic* powers and disciplinary practices, as though they were empty husks and shells. In Vijaykrishna people found 'that sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused', and hence he was always approached as the giver of *Prema-Bhakti*, the highest good, the truest form of Self-Realization.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MASTER AND THE NEW AGE

Advancing step by step towards the goal of his life, Vijaykrishna became not only a Chaitanyaite, but the very reviver of Chaitanyaism. The age in which he flourished being a Scientific age, an enlightened culture-epoch, nobody would acclaim the greatness of one who is merely a *Bhakta,* however great and transcendental he may be, unless he has tried 'to spell, in part, the runes of these, our days.' Even Chaitanya will not have his full quota of appreciation in this age. Vijaykrishna, through his *Sadhana* and teachings, kept himself in closest touch with the thought-currents of the Modern Age, although after the comparative subsidence of the *Bhakti*-feeling, he returned like the New Adam to the Old Paradise. This is Vijaykrishna *par excellence.*

The rapprochement of Science and Religion is a remarkable trait in the life of Vijaykrishna. While learning Medical Science in Calcutta, he came to believe that Science, if studied with insight, brings a man's mind about to religion, as we have already seen. But Science has liberated human thought, and at his first entrance into the Samaj, Vijaykrishna was in the thick of the fight between Authority and free thought. Nourishing himself with the light of his inner sun, Vijaykrishna discredited physical or angelic media in matters religious and said that like waters of the holy Ganges, that are defiled in her lower course, the doctrines received from the wonder-working prophets and seers, are soiled and cumbered, however impassioned of God they may be, for the human agency is always imperfect. The doctrines of the prophets and apostles are not 'served like pan-cake hot and hot'. Truth, in its purest and undiluted form, can be received only direct from God without any mediation whatsoever. God reveals Himself to all and not to some chosen people, living with credentials from Him within a charmed circle. "The self-same sun that shines upon his court hides not his visage from our cottage." Vijaykrishna did not see why the idea of supernaturalism should be associated with book-revelations and the oracular utterances of apostles, for God does not break the law of Nature, and what is seemingly a wonder or mystery is but a deeper law unknown to the generality of people. In these days, there has been a genial distrust of prophets and prophetic utterances, for many people pose as prophets and *Avatars*, maintaining somehow an air of conviction about them. "There were at the present time several of such heroes, all of whom won the war ; though what they did to win it, neither they nor any one else can tell. . . . Their business was to shout directions through a megaphone, but directions happily so vague that no one could obey them even if he would. Not one of these was put to the test like their forerunner Cleon, whom the Athenians suddenly made a commander-in-chief, and who was luckily killed in battle, before he could do much harm."

The freethinkers in the Brahmo Samaj at that time, were up in arms against the crowd of such prophets, but in their righteous indignation, they passed lightly over the extraordinarily sound theology of many prophets and apostolic communities. Vijaykrishna well represents the spirit of the times in the following passage:—"Our thirst is thoroughly appeased even by a single drink from the

Ganges, as she leaves the locks of Shiva. The waters of the Ganges are then as pure as they could be. But as she ran down to Benares, she became defiled, and an abundance of the turbid water of the Ganges there, cannot slake our thirst and give us as much satisfaction as before. Likewise, knowledge derived directly from God without any interposition between Him and the devotee, is pure and undiluted, while religion, as inculcated by the prophets, is fraught with many perversitities and impurities and certainly falls short of the highest truth." Vijaykrishna disliked most the conjectures about God and the attribution of the human motives and sentiments to Him. The absurdities of anthropomorphism were exposed by Robert Browning in his poem *Caliban upon Setebos: Natural Theology in an Island,* when he represented Setebos, the Deity of Caliban's dam, as being listless, wanton, capricious, cruel, and callous like Caliban himself. He lets the twenty crabs go and crushes the twenty-first. Regarding Anthropomorphism Vijaykrishna wrote:—"What a man speaks is but his own sentiments. What he finds in himself, he attributes to his God. That is, his idea of God is framed upon the reading of himself. God is really above such conjectures and absurd suppositions. He is Formless, Omnipotent, Infinite, and is the very Soul of the universe." A wise man once remarked, "Had man a pair of horns, he would have ascribed them to the picture of God he conceived." This is the language of one who upholds Reason as the first and last word of Truth. This love of Truth coursed through Vijaykrishna's entire being so much that he did many things boldly, breaking through the bondage of Authority which is the imperious negation of freethought and independent judgment. He found, in the customs and inelastic systems around him, the entire lack of correlation between Truth and life, and therefore he always kept asserting that one must adventurously push out with the seeker attitude to meet Truth, the Holy Grail, himself. The weight of Authority is very often staggering, and there can be no established Credo for all ages, the *Sadhaka* must feel himself free. Science is one, Religion is one. And one should wait at the door of God, and not of a mortal. It is God alone, Who can touch us and by His grace leave us transformed like the water at Cana turned into wine.

Gradually this rational faith, anti-idolatrous contemptuousness of Vijaykrishna, passed away making room for *Jnana-misra-Bhakti*. From now, Vijaykrishna's idea of Truth enlarged itself. "Truth has many aspects, and a statement which is objectively and literally false or meaningless, may have a subjective truth of its own—a truth depending more on the percipient than on a form of words." Formerly he knew only the 'truth of Science', but now he knew something more, the 'truth of Literature'. "To a narrow mind they appear to be in conflict but they are all parts of a larger whole. And if there is anything to choose between, from the point of view of perennial acceptance and understanding, the advance lies with literature." So Vijaykrishna accepted the very *Shastras* that he had once repudiated with so much vehemence. He made the splendid discovery that the *Shastras* were not the vapourings of the idealistic mind of the leisurely *Rishis* of old ; they are capable of being tested in the crucible of scientific observation and criticism and do not 'spin cobweb distinctions of what things ought to be'.

In turning to the *Shastras* as to the common well, the Pierian spring, from which all may draw water and drink deep to their heart's content, Vijaykrishna smashed the false belief, cherished by many uninformed people that the *Shastras,* that are old and fossilised and covered with lichen, being written down in the hazy past by inspired saints with the freshness of the early world upon them, cannot be for all times. "The present age may be characterized as the age of criticism—a criticism to which everything is obliged to submit ; Religion on the ground of its sacredness, and Law on the ground of its majesty, not uncommonly attempt to escape this necessity. But by such efforts, they inevitably awaken a just suspicion of the soundness of their foundation and also lose all their claim to the unfeigned homage paid by Reason to that, which has shown itself able to stand the test of free enquiry." Substitute 'the Scriptures' for 'Religion' in the above passage and you get a peep into Vijaykrishna's mind. Both then and always afterwards, Vijaykrishna asked everybody to place implicit faith in the *Shastras,* but also see if all the doctrines of the Shastras he had picked up, belong to the world of explicable phenomena. Or, in other words, he should approach the *Shastras* with 'a Faith that enquiries'. To those sceptically inclined and very unwilling to bow down to scriptural authority, which every disciple of his must always do, (not certainly like one kissing the feet of an oriental despot, but with a clear head and a moving heart) the Master cited the fine parable of one who foolishly dug a well for himself, while there was a pond in close proximity. The Master's instructions as to the need of *Shastric* guidance were exactly like the teachings of Sree Chaitanya on the same point in His discourse to Sanatan (related in the Eighteenth Chapter of *Sree Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhya-lila*). Thus proceeded Sree Chaitanya (in Prof. Jadu Nath Sarkar's translation), "If under the teaching of true scripture, a man turns to Krishna, he is saved, he gets rid of illusion. A creature, labouring under illusion, remembers not Krishna. So Krishna kindly created the *Vedas* and the *Puranas*. He makes himself known through scripture, *guru,* and the soul ; and man comes to realize 'Krishna is my lord and saviour'. The *Vedas* treat of Relation, Epithet, and Needs ; that Relation is the attaining of Krishna, faith is the means of this attainment, the epithets are his names ; love is the (supreme) need, the most precious treasure and the highest achievement of humanity. . . . The following parable will illustrate it: An all-knowing seer visited a poor man and seeing his misery said, 'Why are you so poor? Your father has left a large legacy. He died elsewhere and therefore could not inform you of it.' At these words, the man began to hunt for his treasure. In the same manner, the *Vedas* and *Puranas* instruct men about Krishna. . . . The counsel of seer is the source, the treasure is the consequence. By his own knowledge the man could not attain to his father's treasure—the seer had to tell him the method of discovering it.'' Vivekananda would not probably have been so great, if the mantle of Ramkrishna had not fallen upon him, if he had not been the heir of his word. Similarly, only those religions which were based upon the *Shastras* progressed miraculously and held their own, when the persecutors launched their keenest arrows against them.

Personages, however much they might be taken as types, do not reign over men's hearts for ever, and religions founded on their authority cannot be flourishing for all times. ''If, at any time, the historical evidences about the existence of these personages in ancient times, become weak, the whole building of the religion tumbles down and is broken to pieces. We escape this fate, because our religion is not based upon persons, but on principles. . . . Religious knowledge became complete when *Tattvam asi* was discovered, and that was in the *Vedas*. What remained was the guidance of people from time to time, according to different circumstances and environments ; . . . and for this these great teachers came, these great sages." The Hindu Religion has retained its tremendous power and influence at all times, because it is anchored in the *Vedas*. So has the Jewish Religion, because it has at its back the mighty support of the Old Testament. But the Greek Religion, that had no scriptures to guide it, has gone to pieces, and the Greeks themselves died a natural death with their olive crop and their flock. The Greek Religion had beauty, but that could not save it.

The doctrines of the *Shastras,* though maligned and neglected, are not really conflicting with the empirical evidence of the modern times. The time is ripe, when *a priori* faith and rational faith should be reconciled, otherwise the disease of over-reasoning would ravage the mind, and the fragile equilibrium of human civilization would not be maintained. When Science first set out in its career of conquest, there was very naturally a revolutionary and imperial rationalism. But if to-day 'the profound moral and spiritual grounds of immortality' are lost sight of by the people of the New Age, their ideal would remain imperfect, and their vision of truth, one-sided. The Master's discourse on the subject is so savoury, because it is redolent of the spirit of the New Age, which would swing perilously neither to extreme rationalism, nor to blind and dogmatic faith, but would go forward to organize the old and the new towards an ideal aim. So long as Vijaykrishna remained with the young Brahmos who, with their beautiful bragging, cast away the scriptures and gave their place to Ratiocination, relentless why's, he could see one side of the shield. But when he harked back and took to the very *Shastras* he had once stumbled upon, he stood up as the guide and pilot of the New Age. The new man in the age to come, on whose threshold we stand, cannot be a pure rationalist, although H. G. Wells said that 'the arbitrary imperatives—*thou shalt not and thou shalt*—have been substituted by the relentless, *why should you not? and why should you?*' Already in our country, enlightened persons are busying themselves in the study of the *Shastras,* and the very Reason once so wild is now brought to bear on the inestimable treasures of wisdom buried in those *Shastras* it at first excluded. Vijaykrishna knew to a grain that the present loses its transatlantic flavour, unless it is studied as a continuation of the past. Is it wiser, said he, to begin from the beginning or to begin where others have left? Later in life, Vijaykrishna indulged in self-accusations for his former flouting of the *Shastras* and putting a premium upon Reasoned Devotion. But we think that had Vijaykrishna not passed through that necessary phase, he would not have been the representative *Sadhaka* of the modern India, that he verily was.

Vijaykrishna's position as an upholder of intuitous belief was so very sound, because he wrote in his tract, '*What is the goal of life?*' that its opposite is unthinkable and is contradicted by the fundamental laws of thought. It is because God sent him down as the type of the New Age that Vijaykrishna linked up the intuitional and the rational and thus came to have an enlightened faith at the start, from which he gradually wended his way to Chaitanyaite *Bhakti*. But even as the august regenerator of Chaitanyaism, he always attached considerable importance to *Brahma-Jnanam* as a necessary preparative in his teachings to his disciples as well as to outsiders. Though the living image of *Bhakti,* he never disparaged *Jnanam.* He said, "*Bhakti* is the Sister and *Jnanam* is the Brother. How can you adore one whom you do not know?" Again, when like Chaitanya he had cognizance of the tremendous need of the *Shastric* guidance, his constant counsel to his followers was to see for themselves that the Principle of Causality in Modern Science is not out of court in the whole field of our *Shastric* literature. Reason, he knew, never disproves the infallibility of the *Shastras,* but shows that there is in the old, old path a newness waiting for those that seek it. They are old, very old with a Methuselah-long life-history, and yet they are new, never in need of any adaptation to environments and circumstances. The Book of Religion is ever the same Book. Each new Incarnation is the same Man. Turn over the musty moth-eaten pages of an ancient religious book, and you will find in it a vitality, a germinative power that has kept each word alive.

The great founder of the Brahmo religion had surely his allegiance to the *Shastras,* but as a student of the *Shastras,* he was a law unto himself and never liked that anybody should allow himself to be led by the nose. In strongest terms, he repudiated cheap Guruism as being more an evil than a good. The later Brahmos forgot the impregnable bulwark of the scriptures and accorded to Reason the highest and most sacred niche in the *Brahmic* view of life. Absolute conformity to the *Shastras* was to them nothing short of a sheepish slavery proper, not to the enlightened but to the country bumpkins with their tendency to fatuous imitation, although their glorious which he praised but once, in *Tuhfat-ul* written in the predecessor (Rammohun) never advocated free reasoning, childhood of his soul. Vijaykrishna realized after his *Yoga-sadhana* that the incestuous charge levelled at the *Shastras* that, with their *auto da fe,* they ride roughshod over the innate freedom of the soul and are unreasonable, is met by the *Shastras* themselves, when *in toto* they stand the test of reason and give men the latitude of not accepting anything of them, if it does not tally with the findings of reason. "Have implicit faith in the *Shastras*", *said* he ; "but this faith should not necessarily be blind faith but faith born in intuition." In the New Age, our reason and conscience must conjoin with the authority of long ago. Jesus quoted ancient authorities for his statements and convictions, but not in the manner of the scribes. "It hath been said, but I say unto you, 'Greater things than I do shall ye do'." The position of Vijaykrishna was exactly similar, when he cried for a 'draught of that rich vintage that hath been cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth'.

By adopting a Guru at the point in his career at which he did, Vijaykrishna developed an important relation to the tendencies of modern life and thought. It is no wonder that the exaggerated Guruism of the Dark Ages should be followed by the equally exaggerated Free Thought. After the gloom of centuries, the darkness suddenly silvered away with the new dawn resonant with the pæans of joy from the blossoming bough of April. After a long pent-up life, the windows were thrown open, and a good deal of free but vicious air was taken in. Such dreadful reaction is natural and contingent. We know the revolt of the Restoration, against the stern Puritan regime of forty years in English life and literature. The germs of new life which were found in the increasing disgust, were suddenly galvanized into life, and the change seemed not merely a change, but a change with a vengeance. There was no moral backbone to English life during the first twenty years of the Restoration ; but after this there arose an order known as 'Humanised Puritanism', which set itself against the fashionable frivolity of the times and also imparted a fine moral tone to the spineless court-life. Analogous to it is the modern reversion to *Guruship* purged of its antique grossness. The kind of *Guru* acceptable to the New Age is not the *Kula-Guru* of old that had unique sway right through the Dark Ages, but one that has attained real *Rishi-hood*. As Vijaykrishna says:—"In this connection a word was necessary against a system prevalent in some parts of India, what was called the *Kula-Guru* system, a sort of hereditary *Guruism*. . . . There was another danger, for a *Guru* was not a teacher alone ; that was a very small part of it. The *Guru*, as Hindus believed, transmitted spirituality to his disciples. To take a common material example, therefore, if a man were not inoculated with good virus, he ran the risk of being inoculated with what was bad and vile, so that by being taught by a bad *Guru* there was the risk of learning something evil. Therefore, it was absolutely necessary that this idea of *Kula-Guru* should vanish from India. *Guruism* must not be a trade ; that must stop, it was against the *Shastras*." Vijaykrishna said that the *Kula-Guru* system in days of yore was not an evil, for these hereditary *Gurus*, though they could boast of few things to be laid to their credit, examined the horoscope of their would-be disciples and, after divining what stuff they were made of, gave them the *Mantras* most suited to their disposition and character, so that they could easily make headway with little or no external aid. But the days are changed and vice everywhere masquerades as positive childhood of his soul. Vijaykrishna realized after his *Yoga-sadhana* that the incestuous charge levelled at the *Shastras* that, with their *auto da fe,* they ride roughshod over the innate freedom of the soul and are unreasonable, is met by the *Shastras* themselves, when *in toto* they stand the test of reason and give men the latitude of not accepting anything of them, if it does not tally with the findings of reason. "Have implicit faith in the *Shastras*", *said* he ; "but this faith should not necessarily be blind faith but faith born in intuition." In the New Age, our reason and conscience must conjoin with the authority of long ago. Jesus quoted ancient authorities for his statements and convictions, but not in the manner of the scribes. "It hath been said, but I say unto you, 'Greater things than I do shall ye do'." The position of Vijaykrishna was exactly similar, when he cried for a 'draught of that rich vintage that hath been cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth'.

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Always in his life Vijaykrishna loved Nature. We know what power constrained him. Time and again the weird moonshine, the carols of birds, the first golden rays of the sun gemming the green grass, the little bubbling streams, the dusky grey of sunset, the continuous hum of bees impressed his wonderfully soft heart, but these he loved not for themselves, but for the Great Companion beyond. There are some to whom Nature has become an apter substitute for God, and Nature is always spelt with the capital 'N' by them. For them Nature is the most hallowed and sanctified name they can conceive. Then there are the naturalists, who are most unresponsive to the beauty of the moon, or of the stars, or of the earth beneath. They find nothing in Nature which may upset the analyst in them. Vijaykrishna breathes the spirit of compromise between the two. He felt by Nature

> "A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts.........
> Whose dwelling is the light of the setting sun."

When he looked at the moon smiling on the night, it is not the material molecules that attracted him, but God's sweet and serene smile. In one place, he himself writes:—"One night I had to stop at a village. I got up towards the latter part of the night and found Nature clothed in a wonderful garb. How enchanting was the beauty of the moon, how sweet was the perfume exhaled by the flowers. Birds of various sorts were pouring forth their melodious strain. I went to a neighbouring garden. There were many flowers in full bloom. The bees with a sweet hum were flitting from flower to flower and gathering honey. How beautiful must be the Father of the universe whence all this beauty emanates! . . . . Some one seems to have communicated to my bosom the joyous message that all this beauty is His." Both the artistic emotion of the poet and the keenness of observation of the scientist, exist at the same time in the human soul. Man possesses both emotion and curiosity, both love for fancy and love for truth. Neither of them can be starved. In Vijaykrishna Truth is allied to Fancy. Again and again Vijaykrishna spoke and wrote of Natural Beauty with loquacious transports of joy and always in the same spirit, he neither regarded it is as a subjective creation of the poet, nor did he ever strip Nature of her mystic beauty to land on the hard rock of bare facts. Those who are merely Nature-worshippers, are in the wrong, for Nature, though she may be lovelier than any apocalyptic dream, would be as poor a substitute for God as the Cinema, 'the dust-hole of drama' is for the theatre. Through Vijaykrishna we see how we can meet emotion half-way and apply *con amore* to the natural things around us, while treading on the ground of truth. "Truth and Genius had embraced under the eye and sanction of Religion." The New Age awaits the parturition of the spirit, and, in so far as Vijaykrishna represented this spirit, he belongs to the New Age.

So Vijaykrishna was in touch with the palpitating aspects of modern life, and he kept in view the changes in the world outlook, though often lost in the nameless void of *Samadhi ;* and alongside his scientific passion for truth for truth's sake, there was also his recognition of the relation of the individual claimant to society, as has already been described in an earlier chapter. He thus stood so magnificent and august in the hearts of Modern India. His voice carried great weight. He was the Friend and Teacher of the present age, for his whole life, from the Mysterious Source to the Holy Estuary, was an adaptation of the old, old Religion of India to the new problems of life. The broad stream of Religion flows for ever in the *Vedas* with the discovery of that great, great *Mantra 'Tattvam Asi'*. "Men may come and men may go, but I go on for ever." But each age has its own mould, its particular cast, and hence there must be a new approach to Religion.

Each age must worship its own thought of God,
More or less earthy, clarifying still
With subsidence continuous of the dregs;
Nor saint nor sage could fix immutably
The fluent image of the unstable Best,
Sill changing in their very hands that wrought.

Clement of Alexandria, who flourished in the second century, said that 'God became in Christ like us in order that we might become like Him'. At the close of the second century, 'Salvation' was thus interpreted by Clement—"The true athlete—that is the saved man—is he who *in the stadium of this fair world* is crowned for the true victory over all his passions." A later age looked at the thing from a new angle, and such orientation in the outlook must naturally come with men's coming into tighter grips with life, with religion forming, as it were, the very tissue of life's warm experience. Even the very idea of salvation underwent changes, the idea of sin a different connotation ; Clement was not canonized, and there were new interpretations of and improvements upon, his conclusions like the new city of Damascus upon Pharpar and Abana.

All that Vijaykrishna said, he himself practised. His precepts were thus exemplified in his life. He now came to be regarded as *Yuga-Guru*. Wherever he went, people gathered round him to enjoy his holiness, and they felt satisfied no less by his affectionate look and suavity of manners than by the sound instructions which it was their happy lot to receive at his hands. During his last stay at Brindaban, many *Sadhus* paid him visits at Tirthamani's *Kunja* to enjoy his blessed company. Of these Ramdas Kathia Baba, Jagadish Baba, Kamal Das Baul, and Banamali Ray were the most prominent. As Vijaykrishna was not bound to any sect, all persons, irrespective of caste or creed, came to him. He was dear to saints and sinners, the literate and the illiterate, the rich and the poor, the more so, because of the spiritual help with which he blessed them. His days were passing merrily at Brindaban, and he had a mind to stay there for some time more, but he was taken ill in *Bhadra,* 1302 B.S. and he hastened to Calcutta and took up his abode at Sitaram Ghosh's Street. Feeling a little better, he came to Dacca towards the end of *Kartik*.

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The anniversary of the birth day of Adwaita Acharyya came off in the following *Magh*. On that occasion the *Dhulat-Utsab* was observed at the Gandaria Asram, and it continued for a whole week. It seemed a wonder to all. In the higher religious life, nothing is more elevating and ennobling than this throb of wonder. Under a large blackberry tree were placed the pictures of Gouranga, Nityananda, and Adwaita, and the incessant clangour of gongs and bells during the various operations of the *Puja* and the continuous *Samkirtans* with drums and cymbals, created such an excitement that it seemed to be the outpouring of Pentecost. Nobody can conceive of a more thrilling sight of the *Bhakti*-rapture, however much the excited crowd be derided by the modern unbelieving age as being preyed upon by the imps of comedy. As the *Samkirtan* parties set out to parade the streets, the *Bhaktas* felt themselves to be lifted to the azure of Eternity, in their pursuit of The Everlasting Yea. The truest God—God, the Friend of the poor and the humble, God the Image of Love, must be found here, if anywhere, by those who could see. As the *Samkirtan* proceeded through the streets, a cloud of dust hung upon the air, loud cheers were sent, which sounded like distant thunderings. The cobbler on the wayside left off his shoes and pushed forward. Several devotees, who occupied high social positions, forgot, as it were, the use of legs and scampered off on all fours. The Master's body became bristly and swollen like the *Simul* tree, and even his overhanging matted locks stood on end. In this delirium of exuberant joy, the suffering soul, the agonizing heart, the man whose griefs have cut across all hopes, cannot but rejoice. Joy is perhaps the greatest message that Chaitanya has bequeathed to the world. To his friends at Philippi, St. Paul also wrote, "Rejoice, rejoice, and rejoice again." Sreedhar Ghosh, a most devoted disciple of the Master, pointed his finger to the sky in an ecstasy, as though he found there the object of his quest. And finding a carriage coming in his way, he ran wildly to clasp the horse! Some Indian soldiers were marching along the road. As they saw the Master, they lowered their guns and saluted him. After three or four hours, the *Samkirtan* parties returned to the *Asram*. A grand feast was held, in which innumerable beggars and poor people were fed to their heart's content, and the Master Himself did the work of supervision. Not less than five hundred people were initiated that day; nobody's prayer was refused. All were full of joy to overflowing. Even the sacred trees, in their joy, shed a thick juice which wetted all that sat beneath. As the Master looked up, he exclaimed, "Behold, God has appeared to-day in the Image of the Eternal Female."

That was a 'Day' for the Dacca people. But the curtain soon fell upon the stage of Gandaria never to rise again. The Master soon made up his mind to leave Dacca. As the information reached his beloved disciples of Dacca, they were stunned and chilled. But nobody then could know that the Master was leaving Dacca for ever, that the *Dhulat-utsab* was the swan-song of the Master at the *Asram*, that the parting tears of the beloved disciples of Dacca, were never to be dried by the glow and warmth of the Master's re-appearance. The favourite *Asram*—where, in the *Bhajan-kutir*, the Master's body is said to have been elongated, the joints of his limbs detached and become loose in his emotional desperation, and certain serpents were found twisting their stupefying coils over his head and body, where the divine presence floated in the air like the soft sailing cloud of autumn, where thrilling with delight the *Bhaktas* rolled on the dust, and from the Master's body in ecstatic exaltation the *Vahirvasa* dropped off unawares in the course of his sweetest love-dance—that favourite *Asram* is now pale and shrunken like a widow in her weeds; and although the Master has since been found many times in his spiritual body and is still seen and talked to by his beloved disciples, Gandaria has never again brightened up in 'tranquil restoration', and she has nothing to do but to pursue the fantastic forms that are fled, to ruminate on

> The memory of what has been
> And never more will be.

CHAPTER XIX

DISCIPLESHIP AND GURUSHIP

From the moment Vijaykrishna's truth-seeking soul was blessed with the deep spiritual embrace of the *Paramahansa* of *Manas Sarowar* and he actually lost his egoistic consciousness within the loving arms of the *Guru,* he lived the life of a disciple *par excellence*. Practically he did everything at the bidding of the *Guru*. To him the *Guru* was not merely an enlightened and expert instructor of spiritual truths and effective methods of religious discipline, not merely an unerring guide in the path of his spiritual quest, but he was the perfect master of his body, mind and soul. This absolute self-surrender to the *Guru* did not mean the abject slavishness of one individual to another or even the spirit of unquestioning faith and trust of one man in the judgment of another of immensely superior powers and attainments. This was not another name for man-worship, which he had condemned so vehemently in the case of his beloved and revered friend, Keshabchandra. His self-surrender to and worship of the *Guru* was the outcome of his actual experience of Brahman,—the Self of his self,—in the person of the *Guru*. It was born of deeper spiritual truth-realisation in a higher plane of existence.

When the spiritual light with all its freshness and beauty came down to him through the *Guru,* his enlightened soul found in the *Guru* the very embodiment of Divine Grace,—the incarnation in human form of God the Merciful, God the Lover, God the Beautiful. The individuality of the *Guru* as a particular man of this phenomenal world vanished from his inward eyes, or rather became so perfectly transparent that the Supreme Spirit,—the Self of all selves and the Self of the universe—revealed Himself in and through this individual form in all His transcendent glories and with all His mercy and love and beauty. The *Guru* is the first person in whom Godhead—the shining presence of the Divinity really immanent in all men and all creatures and all the phenomena of the world—is directly realised in Its unveiled goodness and greatness. It is this realisation of the Infinite in the finite, of the Formless in the form, of the Universal in the individual, that progressively extends over the whole universe, consisting of bewilderingly diverse orders of beings, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate ; and ultimately the entire world of subjective and objective experience is realised as a spiritual entity and as the diversified manifestation and embodiment of the Divinity,—as the sportive self-expression of the absolutely good and beautiful, infinitely loving and merciful, eternally playful and blissful Supreme Spirit. The *Guru* is thus not only the instructor and guide, but He appears before the earnest truth-seeking aspirant as the visible representation of the Truth about *Brahma* and the Truth about his own self and the universe of his experience.

Bhakta Vijaykrishna truly realised that the *Guru* is identical with *Brahma*. *Brahma* is eternally the *Guru* of all men, just as He is eternally the Creator and Ruler of all beings. But from the stand-point of the spiritual aspirant, His *Guru*-aspect cannot but be acknowledged as superior to His creator-aspect. As the sole Creator and Sustainer and Ruler of the universe He is no doubt omnipotent and omniscient, just and righteous; but His infinite power and wisdom is manifested in His beginningless and endless process of self-diversification,—in His production and sustenance of a plurality of finite individualised spirits subject to transitory joys and sorrows and a plurality of ever-changing material objects to which these spirits are bound down almost without any hope of escape. His supreme lordship over this world is maintained by His creation and preservation, with wonderful skill and design, of a thick veil of Ignorance, which conceals His essential character from the view of the finite spirits and keeps them under the agonising bondage of bewildering illusions, sensuous desires and worldly attachments.

On the other hand, the *Guru*-aspect of the Divine nature is manifested in the removal of this veil of ignorance from the eyes of the finite self-conscious beings, in the revelation of His own essential character to them, in their emancipation from all bondage and sorrow and in the astonishing contrivances to draw them towards Himself and make them participate in His infinite knowledge and beauty and love and bliss. As the Creator He is the cause of the apparent alienation between Himself and His finite self-manifestations, and as the *Guru* He is the cause of the restoration of unity between Himself and them. On account of the veil of ignorance the finite spirits fail to realise that they are in truth individualised self-expressions of the Divine and as such they eternally live and move and have their being in Him and for Him, that He is the true Self of themselves as well as of the objective phenomenal universe, and hence they are essentially and inalienably related to Him and have the inherent right to be eternal participators of His blissful spiritual nature. When by the grace of the *Guru* this veil is torn asunder from the view of the finite individuals, they become truly themselves, they experience themselves and all objective phenomena in their real spiritual character, they enjoy Divine peace and bliss within and without, and the entire world with all the apparently diverse orders of animate and inanimate beings appears to them as an embodiment of spiritual beauty and love and joy.

Thus it is found that in *Brahma* as *Guru* we recognise the noblest and most glorious Divine attributes. As our Liberator from ignorance, bondage, limitations and sorrows, He is Love personified. All His dispensations are the expressions of His loving nature. When we learn to look upon Him as the *Guru,* we find Him perfectly benevolent and merciful, perfectly good and beautiful, perfectly sweet and enjoyable, in all His dealings with us, in all His sportive self-expressions in Nature. He is, as it were, always eager to draw us towards Himself and make us self-conscious playmates in His blissful cosmic and supra-cosmic games. When we concentrate our attention upon this aspect of the Divine character, our heart immediately responds to His love and becomes full of love for Him and all that is His. Our character is thereby transformed into pure love for the Divine, and our outlook upon the world is thoroughly revolutionised. Instead of the ego, moved by ever-changing selfish desires and clingings, *Brahma* as Love and Beauty and Bliss becomes the permanent centre of our life,—the centre of our cognitions and emotions, wishes and activities. We experience ourselves as well as all our environments as Divine, as existing by the Divine will for serving Divine purposes and contributing to the Divine self-enjoyment.

The *Guru*-ship of *Brahma* is progressively manifested in this world of our experience,—in the midst of the manifestations of His creatorship. The law of evolution in this world is really an expression of this *Guru*-aspect of the Divine nature. The process of evolution is essentially a process of progressive emancipation of the finite spirits from the bondage of matter and darkness of ignorance. In the inorganic Nature the essential character of the spirits is so completely veiled that their very existence therein remains incognizable. In course of evolution they are endowed with organic bodies, in which they can assert themselves as the life-power capable of organising all the materials of their bodies, attaining partial mastery over them, and regulating all their functions for serving some central purpose. The organic bodies are gradually developed into sentient bodies, which are far more transparent for the play of the spirits and in which the spirits exhibit themselves in and through the processes of consciousness. In the human bodies the spirits are by nature considerably emancipated from the bondage of matter. The attributes of self-consciousness, self-determination and self-enjoyment, which are inherent in the essential nature of the spirits, are manifested, though imperfectly, at this stage of evolution. Here they know and act by the free exercise of reason and exert control over the physical, vital and mental functions. Henceforward the law of evolution operates through the development of rationality, through the progressive liberation of the spirits' powers of self-consciousness, self-determination and self-enjoyment. At this stage the spirits have to realise their divine possibilities, not through the operations of Natural Laws, but through voluntary obedience to Moral and Spiritual Laws, and the gradual enlightenment of their thoughts, feelings, wills and activities. The aspirations for becoming great and good and beautiful, the yearnings for getting rid of all limitations and imperfections, the cravings for rising above and attaining mastery over the inner and outer circumstances,—all these attributes which are inherent in the human nature are unmistakable indications of the silent operations of the Divine Grace, the *Guruship* of *Brahma* within it.

The revelation of *Vedas* or scriptures and the advent of exceptionally talented religious teachers and reformers in the human society,—for showing a variety of suitable ways of self-fulfilment or God-realisation to the countless human spirits equipped with diverse physical and mental aptitudes and placed under different environmental circumstances,—are brilliant expressions of the *Guruship* of *Brahma,*—His loving solicitude for the spiritual enlightenment and blissful perfection of His finite self-manifestations. But the most glorious and most dynamic expression of His *Guruship* is in the forms of perfectly enlightened and divinized personalities, in whom Humanity and Divinity meet together, in whom Humanity has been completely transformed into Divinity and Divinity has been concretely visualised into Humanity, in whom all the most glorious and attractive Divine characteristics are fully realised and can be clearly recognised, and whose lives are visible expositions and illustrations of the infinite love and beauty, of the perfect goodness and purity, of the unerring knowledge and wisdom, of the imperturbable calmness and tranquillity of the Divine nature. The earnest God-seekers find in such a Personality the very embodiment of the Divine, a perfect image of the ultimate Object of their quest, a complete picture of their own Ideal of self-fulfilment, descending to them graciously for removing the veil of ignorance from their consciousness and revealing to it the all-pervading presence of *Brahma*.

A mere word, a mere touch, a mere look, a mere wish of such a Divine Personality can bring about a thorough transformation in the life of a man, can remove all obstacles in the way of the God-ward movement of a human soul, can illumine the whole being of a man of the world with the light of Divinity. It is through the agency of such Personalities that the Grace of God draws into the innermost chambers of His blissful spiritual Home the struggling souls that are ready for being released from this world through previous preparatory processes, but are unable to enter into them by virtue of their own independent endeavours. As soon as a close spiritual connection with such a Personality is established, as soon as a religious aspirant is initiated and accepted as a disciple by such a *Guru,* he gets a firm footing in the spiritual path, his heart is inalienably tied up to the glorious feet of God, the work of the moulding of his inner character and outer conduct is taken charge of by the *Guru* and he is almost automatically led on to the realisation of Divinity within himself.

It is to be noted that Divinised Personalities living and moving in a country at the same period may be more than one, and each of them may be a dynamic embodiment of the Divine *Guruship;* but they are found not to admit into their direct discipleship each and all that may approach them for this mercy. Sometimes even a most worthy spiritual aspirant is refused admission by one on the plea that he is not his real *Guru,*—that the work of the perfect enlightenment of the particular seeker does not lie with him,—that the final operation of the Divine Grace for conveying him to the highest plane of God-realisation should be through another channel, another divine Personality. The ground of such discrimination is certainly unintelligible to our empirical understanding. The operation of the Divine Grace has its own law, but we are ignorant about the character of this law. This Law of Grace or Love is above the Law of Nature, above the Law of Morality, above the Law of Karma. When the Light from Above illumines our consciousness, this supreme Law is realised as immanent in all other laws and as the ultimate determinant of them all.

Vijaykrishna found the *Guruship* of *Brahma,* with reference to himself, perfectly manifested in the person of Brahmananda Paramahansa, who of his own accord appeared most surprisingly before him at the proper moment and accepted him as his own. He had previously approached several godly persons for religious instruction and obtained valuable lessons from them. Some God-inspired religious teachers bestowed spiritual blessings upon him even without his seeking. Even Chaitanya Deva revealed Himself to him in dream in company with Adwaita and others and initiated him in his semi-conscious state with Divine *Mantra.* But none of them occupied the position of his absolute *Guru,* none of them established complete mastery over his soul, none of them took the entire charge of his spiritual self-fulfilment, none of them claimed from him the perfect surrender of his ego-centric individuality to himself. The Paramahansa appeared to him as the very incarnation of the Divine Grace, who at once swallowed up his egoistic consciousness into his own Divine consciousness, and admitted him into the innermost chamber of his Divine Home and filled his whole being with Divine Truth, Divine Beauty, Divine Love and Divine Bliss. Just after initiation Vijaykrishna lost his empirical consciousness, got release from the bondage of his ego, experienced the blissful transcendent character of his true self which is Divine, and became spiritually one with the

Guru, who revealed himself to him as one with *Brahma.* There was thus complete transformation of the life of Vijaykrishna, who, when he came back to his outer senses, found himself in a new world, was born again as a new man viewing all things from the Divine plane, seeing in everything the expression of Divine Love and Beauty.

From that time onward Vijaykrishna lived the life of a true disciple,—the life of the spiritual child of the *Guru.* All the departments of his inner and outer life were regulated in strict accordance with the injunctions of the *Guru.* His *Yoga-Sadhana,* his *Mantra-Sadhana,* his moral and spiritual self-discipline, his absorption in deep meditation, his religious sermons and instructions to others,—all these were inspired and guided by the *Guru.* The *Guru* sometimes appeared to him in bodily form and sometimes guided him from within. *Guru-sakti* (the spiritual power transmitted into him by the *Guru*) worked within him with wonderful efficiency. All his past experiments with Truth, all the courses of self-discipline he passed through in his earlier life, his extraordinary earnestness for the attainment of the deepest spiritual experiences, had fully prepared his body and mind for the proper reception of and absolute resignation to the Divine Power which descended upon him through the *Guru.* He placed himself entirely at the disposal of this Spiritual Power, this Divine Grace, this divinising operation of the loving hand of the *Guru.*

His own *Sadhana* was now merely the incessant culture of perfect discipleship,—to be in constant touch with the *Guru,* to be always filled with the *Guru,* to remain ever ready to carry out all the commands of the *Guru* in the inner as well as the outer life. Having surrendered his individual ego to the *Guru,*—the incarnation of Divine

Love,—he had now nothing to seek for himself, no aspiration to fulfil, no desire even for personal liberation. His work was only to realise the *Guru* in every atom of his own being and to become His perfect image.

He now looked upon all his spiritual endeavours and practices as the operations of the *Guru-sakti* within him, all his spiritual advancement as the progressive self-revelation of the *Guru* in his life, all his mystic experiences as truths communicated to his consciousness by the *Guru,* all his inner enjoyments as the expressions of the loving, beautiful and blissful character of the *Guru*. His thoughts, feelings and actions were now in perfect tune with the Divine Music of the universe,—they reflected in particularised forms the truth and beauty and goodness of the Divine Mind. Through apparent self-abnegation, his reason was now blessed with real illumination and self-fulfilment and enjoyed absolute freedom from all limitations imposed upon it by the physical and mental imperfections, social and communal prejudices, logical and metaphysical prepossessions, individual tastes, inclinations and idiosyncrasies. The self-luminous Cosmic Reason now directly spoke through his individual reason ; the Heart of the universe rhythmically pulsated his individual heart ; the world-governing Will was recognised as manifesting Itself in his individual will. There was thus no restraint upon freedom from any quarter. Perfect self-offering to the *Guru* amounted to perfect freedom. Perfect realisation of discipleship meant elevation to *Guruship*. To become full of the *Guru* really means to realise Divinity in humanity and to be identified with the Divine *Guruship*.

It appeared to be the Divine plan to present Vijaykrishna to the modern world,—especially to the educated community of modern Bengal,—as a living example of *Sadhana* suited to the present age,—a model of ceaseless search for and continuous approach to the Absolute in the midst of the most complex circumstances of modern life, and a concrete illustration of the practicability of living a thoroughly God-centric life in this apparently materialistic society. He had been led through various stages and forms of discipline and made to acquire various kinds of experience, till he stood face to face with the *Guru* and was relieved of his ego and egoistic ambition, his rationalistic self-conceit and false idea of freedom, his search for the Unknown and internal disquietude. His *Sadhana* was now his life and enjoyment, and not merely a means to the attainment of some unattained end, not a path to the fulfilment of some unfulfilled desire. *Siddhi* meant to him nothing but *Sadhana* becoming part and parcel of life, *Sadhana* turned into nature, *Sadhana* saturating every nook and corner of the individual's being. What would be ultimately gained as the result of this *Sadhana* need not be cared for ; this should be left wholly to the *Guru*.

Vijaykrishna as a true disciple was now deeply absorbed in the enjoyment of *Sadhana* as directed by the *Guru* without any hankering for hurriedly transcending the plane of *Sadhana* and enjoying its sweet fruits in any higher plane of pure *Siddhi ;* but the *Guru* blessed him with newer and newer powers and experiences and gradually equipped him with all the requirements of a *Sad-Guru* in this scientific age. He was to be used as a distinguished and conspicuous vehicle for the operation of the *Guruship* of *Brahma*, for the emancipation from ignorance and bondage and sorrow of a large number of suffering men and women of the present world, and his whole life was moulded accordingly.

He was made to become a *Sannyasi,*—a world-renouncing saint, devoted exclusively to the realisation of Divinity; but after *Sannyasa* he was ordered to live in the midst of domestic and social surroundings with his wife and children, friends and relatives, religious aspirants and worldly-minded people. He was entrusted with the duty of setting up an example of *Sannyasa* in domestic and social life,—an example of perfectly God-centric life, while performing all kinds of domestic and social duties. He was to live in the society as a practical illustration of the possibility of perfect harmony between *Garhasthya* and *Sannyasa,* between home-life and forest life, between the life of action and the life of renunciation, between the sane and sober life of a rationalist and the divine madness of a God-intoxicated devotee. He was to demonstrate by his conduct that in one's own home one can dwell in God's Home, one's own flesh-and-blood relations can be transformed into Divine relations, one's duties to the members of the family and the society can be converted into duties to God, one's pleasure and pain traceable to worldly causes can be accepted as Divine gifts and raised to the plane of spiritual enjoyment. This reconciliation between *Garhasthya* and *Sannayasa* is one of the urgent needs of the present age, and the merciful Governor of human destinies placed Vijaykrishna before the eyes of the world as a living embodiment of this reconciliation.

Secondly, the religion which the Divine *Guru* illustrated in Vijaykrishna's enlightened life was above all sectarianism and communalism, free from all bigotry and fanaticism, uncircumscribed by any doctrinism or churchism. No doubt he was imbued with the ideal of Divine Love of Sri Chaitanya in the highest stage of his spiritual realisation and he accepted Chaitanya's conception of Divinity and his mode of spiritual discipline as the best form of religion suited specially to the present age. But his Chaitanyaism was not identical with the narrow bigoted form of the cult, which is practised and propagated by those who are ordinarily regarded as the orthodox followers of that great *Avatar* of Divine Love. His Religion of Love was all-absorbing, all-assimilating, universal in character, independent of all sectarian dogmas, unconditioned by exclusive attachment to particular Names and Forms of the Divine Lover or specific modes of religious conduct. He accepted and paid homage to the religious experiences of all the *Munis* and *Rishis* of ancient times, all the *Avatars* and prophets of all ages and countries, all the saints and *Acharyas* of different religious communities, and even all the contemporary sages and devotees who reached the goal by different paths of spiritual discipline. It was not what is known as eclecticism in theological circles. His cordial acceptance of all religious truths hitherto revealed to the human society through different channels was based upon deeper spiritual realisation. It was the result of his intimate acquaintance with the innermost soul of all these truths,—his direct experience of the ultimate unity of Religion manifested in all these diverse forms. He realised that his merciful *Guru,* his beloved and all-loving Lord, was progressively unveiling Himself to His human self-manifestations and drawing them towards Himself in various ways, and that he would be failing in his appreciation of His infinite Love and Mercy if he did not offer hearty greetings to all His diverse ways of self-unveiling. He saw the images of his *Guru* in all religious teachers of all ages and countries. He recognised the expressions of the same Absolute Truth in all religious truths clothed in multiform sectarian garments.

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The *Sadhana* into which his *Guru* initiated him fructified into a form of *Siddhi,* in which he became a *Vaishnava* and a *Saiva,* a *Sakta* and a *Soura,* a *Krishnaite* and a *Ramaite,* a monotheist and a polytheist and a pantheist, a rationalist and an emotionalist and a ritualist at the same time. He revered and worshipped and loved all the Deities and deified Personalities, but he found in them the self-expressions of the same Supreme Spirit, the same Loving and Beautiful and Blissful Lord. He made no distinctions among the Deities in offering his homage to them. To him they differed only in names and forms and outer expressions, and in the special fitness of each for stimulating and developing particular kinds of moral, æsthetic and spiritual sentiments in the minds of the devotees. They put the hearts of the sincere spiritual aspirants in inspiring and purifying touch with different glorious aspects of Godhead and different forms of *Lila* or sportive self-revelations of the playful Lord.

Vijaykrishna wept and laughed and danced and passed into the state of trance, with the name of *Siva* or *Krishna* or *Rama* or *Hari* or *Mother* or *Guru* on his lips, as the occasions arose. He wore in his person symbols of *Saivism* and *Saktism* and *Vaishnavism* and other sacred *'isms'*. *Tulsi* and *Rudraksha, Japamala* and *Homakunda, Gopichandan* and *Vibhuti,* obtained equal honours from him. He visited with love and humility the holy places of all sects and the sacred temples dedicated to all gods and goddesses. He offered worship to every Deity in accordance with the form prescribed for it in the *Sastras.* He took great delight in enjoying the companionship of his Supreme Beloved in such diverse embodiments and multiform expressions. He realised within himself and exposed to truth-seekers the special excellences of all systems of religion. Mahomedanism, Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism,—all these systems received his loving homage. He respectfully mixed with the *Auliyas, Bauliyas, Sahajiyas, Lingayats, Tantrics* and others. He paid tribute to the teachings and the saints of these religious communities. The names of Allah, God, Jesus, Buddha awakened Divine consciousness in him and filled his heart with ecstatic joy. The sacred Books which were read regularly before him included the inspiring texts of the Scriptures of different communities. He sought out and enjoyed the companionship of the holy men of all sects, and a spiritual comradeship was established for all times between him and them.

Moreover, there was a very happy synthesis of higher forms of spiritual discipline with rites and ceremonies of popular religion in the system of *Sadhana* illustrated in his life. He spoke of his *Sadhana* obtained from the *Guru* as *Yoga-sadhana*. But his *Yoga* did not consist in any forcible suppression of breath and mental functions, or in any artificial process of concentration, nor did it demand any compulsory dissociation from social life and retirement to the caves or forests. It was a positive practice of incessant communion with the Beloved Lord of the soul. The soul was not to leave behind the body and the mind and then to be united with the Supreme Self. But the body, the senses, the mind and the intelligence were to follow and accompany the aspiring soul for being in continual touch with the Absolute substratum and Source and Self of them all, without being completely detached from the world in which the playful Lord was pleased to place them. The entire being of the individual was to be spiritualised, in its subjective as well as in its objective aspect. The injunction of 'Give unto God what is God's' should be carried out in the whole sphere of the existence of the *Yogi,* because there was really nothing which was not God's. Thus the bodily activities, the sensuous impulses and demands, the mental thoughts, feelings and desires, the intellectual judgments and reasonings, should all be raised to the plane of devotional service to the Lord and kept wide open for receiving light and guidance from Him. There should be perfect *Yoga* or union of all the departments of human life with the Divine. All activities should be transformed into the service of the Lord; all persons and things of the objective world should be viewed as the manifestations of the Lord; all affairs, human as well as natural, should be enjoyed as the sportive expressions of the blissful character of the Lord; all thoughts should be concentrated on the beauty and sublimity of the Lord; all feelings should be resolved into the all-embracing and all-sweetening emotion of Love for the Lord. This is true *Yoga*. The form of meditation, which consists primarily in the individual soul's withdrawing and dissociating from the diversified manifestations of the eternally self-enjoying and playful Supreme Spirit and its ascending to the spiritual realm of the absolute unity of His transcendent nature, is only one aspect of *Yoga,* though it is at a certain stage a discipline of undoubted practical importance for the attainment of *Yoga* in its perfection. The other aspect of *Yoga* is to bring the Supreme Spirit with all His purity and beauty and lordliness down to this phenomenal world of plurality,—to the planes of the mind and the senses and the bodily activities,—and thereby to spiritualise and unify all these diversities and to experience and enjoy the play of the Spirit in all of them. It is this complete *Yoga* which Vijaykrishna by the grace of his *Guru* realised in his *Sadhana* and exemplified in his life.

The method adopted for the realisation of this perfect *Yoga*—this complete union—with the Absolute Spirit above as well as within this world or relativity, is, as interpreted by the life and teachings of this modern representative of Chaitanyaism, very simple and direct. Love is the true bond of union. The cultivation and development of pure and sincere love for the Lord is the surest and straightest way to the realisation of this perfect union. Love is the Divine element present in the heart of every individual. Love is in truth the essential nature of the soul. It is love which unites us with other men and women and is the true basis of family, society and nation. It is love which tends to unite us with the Humanity, with the animal world and ultimately with the whole world of physical nature. Love is the only source of abiding harmony, peace and unity in this world. Love always sweetens, beautifies and glorifies its objects and makes them enjoyable. All hardships, all sacrifices, all privations, become sweet and enjoyable, if voluntarily embraced for the sake of love. It is the differentiations and partitions of love, the limitations and imperfections of love, the corruptions and debasements of love, which are the causes of all disharmony and disquietude and disunion within the complex nature of each individual as well as in his relations with the environments. Spiritual *Sadhana* consists in the purification and divinization of this love, in making it free from all shades of egoism, lust, avarice, hatred and fear, and concentrating it upon the one Lord and Self of all the diversities of experience. Learn to love God with all your heart and all the puzzling problems of your inner and outer life will be automatically solved. The love for the Absolute Spirit, which is inherent in the essential nature of the finite individual spirit, but overshadowed by the worldly influences, has to be awakened and developed and refined and to be made all-absorbing. Concentrated and all-swallowing love for the Divine makes the whole life Divine, for love is life.

Thus Vijaykrishna's *Yoga* was the *Yoga of Love.* The entire being of the *Yogi* has to be converted into unadulterated Love for the Divine. His body, his senses, his mind and reason, his outlook on the self and the environments, his movements and enjoyments and sufferings,—all have to be saturated with Divine Love. There should be no thought, no emotion, no action, which is not an expression of his love for the Beloved Lord. The highest ideal, the eternal type, of this *Yoga* is *Sri Radha,* who is the most perfect embodiment of Absolute Love, and in relation to whom God is Absolute Beauty. It is this *Yoga of Love,* which Sri Chaitanya exhibited in his life and preached to the world, to the high and the low alike. All the mystic experiences and occult powers, of which the treatises on *Yoga* speak, are bestowed on this *Yogi* by the Divine Grace without his seeking for them. Vijaykrishna was prepared by his *Guru* to revive and preach this *Yoga of Love* to the apparently materialistic and individualistic human society of the present age.

The simplest, the most effective and the most universally popular method of practising this *Yoga of Love* is, as Vijaykrishna practised and taught it, the incessant repetition within the mind of the significant Divine Name obtained from the Guru *with every breath.* The spiritual power of the Guru is infused into the Divine Name with which the Guru initiates the disciple into the path of *Yoga.* It is charged with immense spiritual potentialities. The Name is spiritually identical with the

Guru, who is inwardly identical with the Love-aspect of the Divine. Ceaseless contact of the mind with the Divine Name means the continuous Godward flow of consciousness, which thereby remains in a fit condition for the Truth-unveiling operation of the Divine Grace. Along with the continued remembrance of the Name, the Divine Grace progressively purges the mind and the body of all impurities, of all worldward propensities, of all egoistic impulses, of all attachments to the diverse objects of sense-gratification, and of all obstacles in the way of the realisation of the Truth, Love and Beauty of the Spirit ; and in this purified mind the self's innate Love for the Supreme Self manifests itself in its perfect glory, and having spiritualised the entire being of the devotee unites him with the Absolute Beloved.

Yoga is truly accomplished by the Divine Grace. But the *Sadhaka's* will ought to be in a fit mood to receive the Grace, to accept the blessings, to co-operate with the Power descending from above. The Divine Name obtained from the *Guru* is the most potent medium through which the *Sadhaka's* love is refined and concentrated and ascends upwards to God, and God's love is focussed and condensed and comes downwards to the *Sadhaka's* soul. The Name has the power of charming up the human spirit to the Divine and charming down the Divine Spirit to the human. The Name, if rhythmically repeated with every breath for a sufficiently long time, mingles with the circulation of blood and the formation of flesh and bones, regulates all the mental, vital and physical processes and virtually spiritualises the mind and the senses and the body. All functions of the psycho-physical organism dance in love and joy with the sweet Name of the Beloved Lord. The whole being of the *Sadhaka* becomes electrified with the Love of the Absolute and *Yoga* or union with Him is perfectly established.

This *Nama-Yoga* occupies the central position in the practical culture of the *Yoga of Love,* as Vijaykrishna practised and taught it, and all other factors of spiritual discipline revolve round it. This is accordingly a system of *Sadhana,* which is charming for its simplicity and sweetness and which is universally acceptable and thoroughly practical for all grades of religious aspirants. All forms of religious rites and ceremonies, not involving any cruelty or hatred or bigotry or any kind of moral turpitude, are compatible with this *Sadhana,* but none of them is essential for it. The holy festivities which awaken and develop in the minds of the people the consciousness of their eternal relationship with the Divine and put them in spiritual touch with the godly men of the past and the present are encouraged as specially helpful for the progress of this *Sadhana.* Whatever rouses in the heart an earnest aspiration for God-realisation, whatever stimulates the love for the Divinity, whatever develops the sense of the superiority of spiritual life to worldly life, whatever reminds us of the true spiritual ideal immanent in the human soul, should be availed of as an aid to this *Yoga of Love.* Companionship with sincere devotees and God-intoxicated men is most efficacious in this direction. Vijaykrishna, though his whole existence was full of love for the Supreme Spirit and he had no necessity for any stimulant or aid, took part in all kinds of devotional festivities and ceremonies and kept company with holy men.

Vijaykrishna's all-embracing spiritual outlook and non-sectarian religious view, his uninterrupted *Yoga* with the Supreme Spirit in the midst of all diversities and his realisation of the various aspects of the Divine Truth and Beauty and Goodness, the sweet loveliness of his nature and his life of strict discipline, the freedom of his reason and will perfected through intelligent and loving obedience to the *Guru* and the *Sastra*, and his practical harmonisation of science with religion, of the sensible world with the spiritual world, of the domestic and social life with the life of renunciation and universal love, of the popular ceremonial religion with the religion of deep meditation and mystic intuition,—all these fully equipped him with the requisites for spiritual leadership of all classes of people in the present age. But to Vijaykrishna himself all these qualifications meant nothing but the manifestations of the Divine Grace in him, nothing but the self-revelations of the *Guru* to whom he absolutely surrendered his ego.

He was nothing but a true disciple, always at the command of the *Guru*. His individuality lay only in carrying out the wishes of the *Guru* in his inner as well as in his outer life. He did not care for the fruits of his *Sadhana*. The fruits that came to him he gratefully and lovingly received as the blessings of the *Guru*. What he cared for was perfect discipleship, so that his ego might not raise its rebellious head on any occasion. The slightest trace of egoism would be a breach in the discipleship, a discontinuity in the flow of the consciousness towards the Supreme Object of love and devotion. But the perfection of discipleship inwardly meant the full realisation of *Guruship*,—the transmutation of the disciple into a perfect medium for the self-revelation of the *Guru*. Thus Vijaykrishna, being full of the *Guru* within, appeared as the ideal *Guru* to the God-seekers who surrounded him and begged for his mercy. At the bidding or inspiration of the *Guru*, he gladly accepted the duty and responsibility of *Guruship* and began to transmit the spiritual power and wisdom conferred on him by the *Guru* to the sincere and earnest seekers of spirituality who approached him for it.

Henceforward he lived the life of an ideal disciple and an ideal *Guru* at the same time. He himself never claimed to be the *Guru* to his disciples, but he put them, as he said, in spiritual contact with the *Guru* working within him. The Divine Grace descended upon them through him. He initiated them into the *Yoga-sadhana* in which he himself was absorbed day and night without any break, passed into them the Divine Name energised with infinite Divine power which roused and activated the spiritual capacities and virtues remaining dormant and inert in their souls, instructed them about the channels in which their thoughts, feelings and activities ought to flow towards the Supreme Ideal of life, and asked them to surrender their ego and make over all charge about their future destinies to the *Guru*. Hundreds of persons flocked to him for being accepted as his disciples and receiving the Divine Grace through his perfectly spiritualised personality. They found in him the living embodiment of the Divine *Guru*, of whom he spoke with deep emotion—the very incarnation of Truth, Love, Beauty and Bliss. He poured down his love and showered his blessings upon all. He pointed out to them the ways to the fulfilment of human existence. He presented to them his own life as a shining example of what a man should be and could be.

But he accepted as his direct disciples only those, upon whom the Divine Grace, in accordance with its own law, descended through him. He used to tell his disciples that he was merely a trustee or a manager appointed by the *Guru*. He was entrusted by the *Guru* with some spiritual treasure over which he was to keep constant watch and of which he was to make use according to His wishes.

The names of those who would be recipients of this treasure were enlisted in the *Guru's* register. He was at the bidding of the *Guru* to convey it to the proper persons at the proper time. The criterion of the relative worth of the seekers of mercy was known to the *Guru* alone. The disciple must accept the decision of the *Guru* as final.

Thus inspite of his love and good-will for all, he could not accepted as his disciples all persons who approached him for initiation with apparent earnestness. To accept *Guruship* means to take the entire charge of the spiritual welfare of the disciple, and to admit him into the inner chamber of the palace of his spiritual realisation. A few hundreds had the good fortune to be blessed by the Divine Grace through him and to be recognised by him as his disciples. He poured himself into them by way of initiation.

Sad-Guru Vijaykrishna impressed upon his disciples the great importance of cultivating and developing the spirit of true discipleship. The disciple, in order to attain the perfection realised in the *Guru* has to install the *Guru* on the throne of his heart, has to spiritualise his ego by surrendering it to the Divine Self of the *Guru,* has to develop the true freedom of his reason and will by subordinating them to the unerring intuition and Divine inspiration of the *Guru,* has to try his utmost to carry out the commands of the *Guru* and to offer his whole being to be moulded by His spiritual power. The fulfilment of the disciple's life lies in the perfection of his discipleship, which means that he should be full of the *Guru* within and without, and to be full of the *Guru* means to be full of the Divine, to realise Divinity in humanity. The *Guru* represents to the disciple the Spiritual Ideal to be realised as well as the Spiritual Power that should guide him to its realisation.

Vijaykrishna taught the truth-seekers to think of God in terms of His *Guru-ship*. He would sometimes controvert the statement that *'Brahma is Guru'* by asserting that *'Guru is Brahma.'* What he meant is that the essential character of *Brahma* can be more truly comprehended in the light of the conception of *Guru*. When we contemplate *Brahma* as manifested in Nature or in the world of living beings or in the human society, we find in His self-expressions truth as well as falsehood, beauty as well as deformity, tenderness as well as harshness, love as well as cruelty, enjoyment as well as suffering; we find in them the operations of the law of struggle for existence, the triumph of might over right, the survival of the strong and the destruction of the weak, and so on. The contemplation of *Brahma* as the sole Ground of all these does not lead to the proper appreciation and realisation of the true character of *Brahma*. To think of Brahma as attributeless, differenceless, powerless and inactive or as arbitrary and indifferent to the good and evil in His world, is also to take a one-sided view. In His self-expression as *Guru, Brahma* is All-Truth, All-Beauty, All-Love, All-Bliss, and this is the true character of Brahma. When we learn to look upon all the diversities of the world as the creations of the Guru, when we conceive the Guru as the Ground of all these diversities, our outlook on the world is changed, we can appreciate and enjoy all the differences and the apparent contradictions as the expressions of Truth, Beauty, Love and Bliss ; everywhere we can cognise the Truth, see the Beauty, reciprocate the Love and participate in the Bliss of Brahma. In the Guru the disciple may also get the direct vision of Humanity and Divinity in the closest embrace with each other. In Him Humanity is Divinized and Divinity is Humanised. The disciple may find in the *Guru* the Ultimate Ideal of human life perfectly realised,—Humanity perfected into Divinity, —and also the Supreme Lord of the Universe manifesting Himself through love and mercy as an embodied Personality and coming down to him for the purpose of unveiling to his experience the essential Divine character of His self and universe.

It is chiefly the spiritual influence of Vijaykrishna's life and teachings that has widely popularised this conception of *Guru* in the circle of religious-minded educated people of modern Bengal and outside. In the history of Devotional Mysticism this conception has all along played a very important part, and it had been expounded in various ways before him by the mystic saints and religious teachers of the ancient and the middle ages. But it is Vijaykrishna who purged the doctrine of all impurities and superstitions that had been mingled with it and made it acceptable to the educated minds of this rationalistic age.

Vijaykrishna as the *Guru* took the whole responsibility, under the direction of his own *Guru,* for moulding the lives of his disciples and leading them on in the path of God-realisation. They experienced and have been experiencing his spiritual influence in all the departments of their life. But as an individual he always lived the life of a true disciple, he was always at the beck and call of his *Guru,* in every detail of his movements he acted according to the wishes and commands of the *Guru,* he presented to his disciples the ideal of perfect discipleship. In all his doings his *discipleship* and *Guruship* were exhibited together, each being reflected on the other with the most inspiring beauty.

Om Namah Sad-Gurabey.

CHAPTER XX

RECALL TO JAGANNATH-DHAM

Vijaykrishna so completely surrendered his ego to his *Guru* and was so deeply absorbed in the thought of his eternal Lover, that sometimes he appeared not to know what he would do or what would happen to him the next moment. But he was always in a thoroughly prepared state to carry out without a moment's delay the orders of the Master of his soul and body. He might be talking with his wife or children in a remote village of Bengal, when all on a sudden he might feel the call and start for Benares or Brindaban or any other place as directed, leaving all behind him in a state of wonder and bewilderment and without waiting a moment for money or any companion. He might be plunged in deep meditation or engaged in a serious discourse, when the fiat might come for his leaving the place and he would immediately submit and move out. He with his disciples might be on his way to a religious congregation where many distinguished gentlemen might be eagerly expecting him; but to the astonishment of all he might suddenly direct his footsteps towards a theatre for witnessing a dramatic performance. The call from the *Guru* might come at midday or at dead of night, at the time of meditation or at the time of action, at the moment of the birth of a child or at the moment of the death of the nearest relative,—whenever it might come, the disciple must remain prepared to listen to and comply with it. This was illustrated on numerous occasions

Vijaykrishna's life in the presence of his astonished admirers.

Vijaykrishna, though a *Sannyasi,* was the head of a big family consisting not only of his wife and children and relations, but also not unoften of a good many disciples and admirers and guests, who would come to enjoy his sweet and inspiring company and reside in his *Asrama* for a considerable period at a stretch. They all depended upon him as their master for their food and comforts during their sojourn with him. But the master had no definite source of income, nor would he appeal to any one for help. He had no ego; he did not consider them as his dependants or himself as responsible for supplying them with what they needed. On the other hand, he would not allow them to be in the least anxious for their requirements. He would warn them that any such anxiety would imply their want of faith in their Master. He had perfect reliance upon the loving and beneficent care of the *Guru* and he would leave everything to Him. Not unoften was it found that up to midday there was no article of food at the *Asrama,* while a good number of guests would have to be fed. But the master went on with his routine work as usual without the slightest trace of any anxiety or unrest on his face. He had his *kirtan* and *bhajan,* he listened to the sacred books read before him, he plunged himself into deep meditation, he gave instructions to the truth-seekers. There was absolutely no thought about what people regard as the primary necessaries of life. To Vijaykrishna's mind, the disciples were to think only of the *Guru* and to do His work. It was for the *Guru* to make provision for the disciples and to look after their welfare in the way He thought best. The disciples must be ready to starve or to undergo all sorts of hardship or even to face death, if the *Guru* so desired, with the name of the *Guru* in the heart and on the lips and without the least doubt about His unlimited love and mercy. It was, however, invariably found that adequate money or articles of food or other necessaries would come to the *Asrama* in the nick of time. This might cause surprise to others, who might ascribe it to the master's miraculous power. But the master would neither be surprised nor find anything miraculous in such occurrences. He was always in inward touch with the *Guru* and was always conscious that the loving Lord was sure to do the right thing at the right moment in the most appropriate way. He was therefore never troubled by any sense of want or uncertainty or perplexity ; the serenity and tranquillity of his consciousness was never disturbed ; his enjoyment of the Divine bliss was never interrupted.

Ordinary men of the world, who swear by the name of reason and free-will, but whose reason and will are in practical life dominated by the passions of their lower nature and puzzled and perplexed by every problem of vital importance, fail to form a correct estimate of the tremendous moral and spiritual strength, the dauntless and deathless determination, the unflinching and unshakable conviction, the complete mastery over the passions and weaknesses of the sensuous nature, which are involved in absolute self-surrender to the *Guru* and perfect reliance upon His love and providence in the midst of worldly circumstances. In truth, the degree of the spirit of surrender to and reliance upon the Lord of the soul is the measure of the freedom of reason and will from the slavery of the worldly forces. That is why the Divine *Gita* starts with the message of unyielding strength and freedom and ends with the message of absolute self-surrender to the Lord. The development of Vijaykrishna's life brilliantly illustrated the Divine message.

RECALL TO JAGANNATH-DHAM

The last phase of Vijaykrishna's life consisted mainly in his setting up a glorious example of ideal discipleship and ideal *Guruship*. He was now on his way back to the transcendent self-luminous self-enjoying Source of his being. He was always prepared to give up his connection with the body and be merged in the blissful existence of his Supreme Beloved. His body also was gradually giving way. Sometimes it appeared to be incapable of bearing the waves of the internal joy, which were born of his emotional communion with the playful Lord. But the *Guru* wanted to keep him in the body for some time more and to have some more of His works of Grace accomplished by him. He of course readily submitted, for he had no will other than the will of the *Guru*. At this time people in larger and larger numbers were attracted to his presence and were inspired by the spirituality radiating from him and expressed through his words, his looks, his modes of behaviour, his songs and dances, his deep meditation, his blissful appearance, his mystic experiences and powers, the wonderful transformations of his physical features in love-trances, etc. Many of them sought from him initiation into *Yoga-sadhana*. He dealt with them in accordance with the direction of the *Guru*, at whose disposal his life and activities were.

As soon as the *Dhulat Utsab* at Dacca was finished, during which numerous men and women of all grades of the society were blessed with spiritual initiation and put into the path of *Yoga*, he felt called upon to leave Dacca immediately and to go to Calcutta. Despite all the wails and importunities of the disciples and admirers, he left for Calcutta, where many people were eagerly waiting for his blessings. He took his abode in a house in Sitaram Ghose's Street. All sorts of people, who had any interest in religion or were being disturbed by any puzzle in religious matters, began to assemble round him. Theists and atheists, Brahmos and *Sanatanists*, lovers of knowledge and lovers of devotion, the cultured and the uncultured, the *Brahmans* and the *Sudras* and the so-called untouchables,—all felt attracted towards him and sought opportunities to be blessed with his company. His daily routine of work was as usual, and he emphasised by his example that regularity of habits was an essential factor in every method of spiritual discipline. *Japa* (repetition of the Divine Name along with contemplation of the Lord, of whom the Name is the verbal embodiment), *Swadhyaya* (reading of sacred books in a devotional mood), *Iswara-Pranidhana* (meditation on the Lord and cultivation of the spirit of self-offering to Him), *Bhoga-Nibedana* (offering of all articles of food and enjoyment to the Lord) and *Prasada-Sevana* (taking of food as the boon of the Lord in a worshipful spirit), *Sad-alochona* (discussion on religious topics with an earnest and sincere truth-seeking attitude), *Kirtana* (singing the Name and the glories of the Lord),—all these formed parts of the routine of his *Asrama* and had to be performed in their proper times. Only in exceptional cases for the sake of urgent matters of higher spiritual importance could any deviation from the routine be allowed. The Master himself, though inwardly residing always in the blissful spiritual realm, was never found negligent of or indifferent to the outer forms of discipline.

Vijaykrishna had been an enthusiastic religious preacher of great reputation, so long as he himself had been groping in the dark and searching for light. When the light came and his whole being was spiritually illumined, he ceased to be a preacher and became a radiator of spirituality. He would remain calmly on his seat with his glowing eyes directed inward, his liberated mind in deep embrace with the universal Mind, and his blissful heart enjoying the spiritual truths and beauties revealed to it by the *Guru* within ; while his very presence acted like a spiritual dynamo transmitting spiritual powers in all directions and infusing spiritual fervour into all who came within the sphere of its influence.

Not only was the whole atmosphere in his proximity spiritually electrified ; but his magnetic influence was not unoften felt by persons separated from him by long spatial distances and altogether unacquainted with his name and fame. Many persons saw him in dreams and felt attracted towards him, long before they could discover that the object of their vision was bodily living and residing in the metropolis of Bengal. There were instances of persons who never thought of initiation from a *Guru* or were averse to the very idea, involved in discipleship, of surrendering the freedom of their thought and action to another individual presumably as imperfect as themselves, but who were mysteriously drawn to his presence by a combination of circumstances over which they had no control and were received by him as expected guests and treated as intimate friends. The mere contact with him would remove their long-cherished prejudices, awaken in them a sense of need for initiation and prompt them to loving self-surrender to his feet. It is really a wonder that some of those who had been most violently opposed to *Gurudom* and had been rationalists and freethinkers from head to foot were amongst the earliest of his disciples and the staunchest of the believers in the Divinity of the *Guru*. It was due not to any oral preaching on his part, but to the spiritual power operating in him and the silent message which his truth-enjoying heart passed irresistibly into their truth-seeking hearts.

Let us cite one case as an illustration of the way in which the *Guru-Sakti* in him acted on others. One gentleman, a reputed lawyer, is said to have felt an inner craving for spiritual bliss in his early youth and joined the Brahmo-Samaj for its satisfaction. Having practised prayer and worship and contemplation for several years in conformity to the principles of the Samaj, he found no peace of mind, no touch of the Supreme Spirit, no freedom from the bondage of the ego and its worldward inclinations. His mind revolted against religion itself, lost faith in the very existence of God and became a worshipper of sensuous pleasure. Sense-enjoyments also could give him no sense of satisfaction and complacence, and he became restless. He began to take interest in so-called spiritualism,—invocation of spirits,—and along with some friends sought communications from disembodied souls of men through a female medium.

One day the spirit of Vijaykrishna's departed Brahmo friend, Aghore Nath Gupta, is said to have entered into the medium and in reply to queries urged that gentleman to seek *Yoga-diksha* (initiation in *Yoga-sadhana*) from Vijaykrishna. Though having no faith in *Gurudom* the gentleman went, through sheer curiosity and in deference to the counsel of the spirit, to the Master in Calcutta. The Master listened to his story and agreed to initiate him into the true path of spirituality. But when the gentleman actually took his seat for initiation, he seemed to realise afresh that the Master would give *Mantra* to his ears and take the superior position of *Guru* in relation to him, and that he would have to submit to his dictatorial authority. His old prejudice raised its head and his mind revolted. He stood up from the seat and said that it was impossible for him to surrender his individual freedom to a human being and accept his discipleship. The Master gently replied that most truly a finite human being can never claim to be the *Guru* of another finite individual, that it is *Brahma* and *Brahma* alone Who is the *Guru* of all and Who in His infinite mercy comes down in some form to take a truth-seeker into His own path, and that the person through whom His mercy descends is merely a medium of His self-expression. The infinite and eternal Lover reveals Himself and the truths about Himself to the unenlightened truth-seekers in and through enlightened finite media.

The gentleman received the *Mantra*. The *Mantra* appeared to him so alive and powerful that it soon caught hold of his entire being and asserted its mastery over it. He felt that he required no effort to repeat the *Mantra*, but that the *Mantra* was gradually pervading his mind in spite of himself. Not only that. Sitting by the side of the Master, he happened to see various indications of the Divinity of the Master,—he saw the Divine Name floating in shining letters in different parts of the Master's body and also on the surface and borders of his seat, he saw Divine figures, such as *Radha-Krishna* and others, appearing and disappearing on the Master's person and so on. Soon his mind was to a great extent transformed, and he was almost convinced of the identity of *Brahma*, *Guru* and *Mantra*.

He was still a man of reason. He asked the Master about the significance of what he saw,—whether these visions represented real truths or were mere hallucinations, and if true, whether they were the exhibitions of his *Yogic* powers or the actual self-manifestations of the Divine Lord. The Master answered in his characteristic sweet and clear language that what he saw were all true, and that though such things might be, as he supposed, products of the *Yogic* powers of saints, they were not so in his case, but were the veritable expressions of Divine Mercy. He explained to him that if the mind be in constant touch with the Divinity as represented by the Mantra and the *Guru* and if it be unreservedly open to His self-revelation without the intervention of the ego and selfish desires, He lovingly and playfully exhibits Himself in various forms to the devotee and confers on him various kinds of spiritual enjoyments. The disciple was also instructed to accept all such visions as special expressions of Divine Mercy on him,—as special favours conferred on him by the Loving Lord,—not only on that occasion, but on future occasions as well. The disciple's mind underwent a thorough spiritual metamorphosis, all his doubts and prejudices vanished, and his self-surrender to the *Guru* was complete. He afterwards recorded his varied experiences of the merciful self-revelations of the *Guru* in his life and published them in the form of a very interesting book.

The instance cited here is not a solitary one, but is given here by way of illustration of one of the modes of the Master's wide diffusion of spirituality in the country. It is only one among the numerous cases of conversion of non-believers into staunch believers, of pleasure-seekers into earnest God-seekers, of atheists into whole-hearted devotees, of ego-worshippers into self-surrendering *Guru*-worshippers, of men immersed in materialism and worldliness into world-renouncing *Brahma*-intoxicated saints. The touch of the Philosopher's stone turned all kinds of base metals into pure gold. This work of conversion went on day after day, and men and women from far and near were drawn to the Master by some mysterious Power. The

Master attributed all the miracles, which others experienced in and round him, to the Divine Grace, to the *Guru's* play of love. He was merely an instrument in this blissful game of the Lord. In his dealings with all, high and low,—even in his dealings with the disciples, who with their eyes of devotion actually experienced the Divine in him and surrendered themselves to his mercy,—he was Humility Incarnate. His *Guruship* never overshadowed his discipleship, and this itself was a lesson of the utmost spiritual importance to the disciples and to all who approached him for spiritual enlightenment. Without sincere humbleness of the heart, without emancipation from the clutches of the vain ego, without the cultivation of the habit of seeing goodness in others and paying respects to them, no substantial progress in the path of spirituality is possible. Self-conceit, in any degree and in any form, is the stumbling-block in the path of devotion to the Lord and realisation of His love and mercy.

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The house at Sitaram Ghose's Street proved too small to accommodate the guests that daily came to pay homage to him and get his blessings. A more commodious building was secured in Harrison Road. His work,—or rather the Divine work in him—went on as before. He was seated on the same *Asana* in the same posture almost day and night. As a result of his sitting cross-legged for hours together every day without any movement of his limbs, the motor nerves of his legs appeared to have been gradually stiffened and he experienced some difficulty in walking without help. At the time of *Kirtan*, however, all his limbs seemed to be electrified and they danced quite freely and energetically in tune with the music and the sentiments it gave expression to. His long matted locks would often stand on end in consequence of the play of strong emotions of love and joy within his heart. Except on such supernormal occasions of rapturous waves of heavenly delight, the Master used generally to pass days and nights in a serene meditative mood, with a continuous flow of Divine bliss within and a calm and smiling gravity in his outer appearance.

Though he scarcely moved from his seat and still less showed any inclination to please his visitors with any vain or light talks, there was almost a ceaseless torrent of people towards him throughout the day. Men of high social status, like Sir Ramesh Chandra Mitra and Sir Gurudas Banerjee, Kalikrishna Thakur and Umesh Chandra Datta, Pratap Chandra Majumder and Chandi Charan Sen, would come to him respectfully and humbly for spiritual light and for the solution of the subtle moral and spiritual problems which puzzled their brains. The Master would receive them with cordiality and honours rightly due to their position and attainments, discuss social, moral and religious topics with them, point out to them the way to the real solution of their problems and suggest to them how they could turn the opportunities bestowed on them by the Grace of the Lord to the real and permanent benefit of the society. He would say that persons, who were wealthy or learned or occupied positions of authority and prestige in the State or Society, ought to be conscious of the great responsibility entrusted to them by the Divine Ruler of human destinies and their obligations to the poor and uncultured and depressed people of the country. Those who thought that their fortunes were given to them for their own enjoyments and self-aggrandisements were guilty of treason against the Divine Mercy and proved themselves unworthy of holding these positions of trust and were liable to be discharged. The Master showed honour to the fortunate persons in appreciation of the rare opportunities which his beloved Lord conferred on them for rendering valuable services to His creatures and always tried to rouse in them a dynamic consciousness of the responsibilities inherently associated with their possessions.

But he generally avoided the company of rich men who were proud of their riches, and whose energies were spent up in the worship of wealth and honour and pleasure. He pitied those who forgot the spiritual ideal of human life and employed their wisdom and power in the futile attempt to satisfy their economic and hedonistic ambitions. Wealth, learning, power, prestige, etc., were, he taught, of little worth, unless they were subservient to the spiritual ideal, unless they were dedicated to the service of God and the service of His creatures. They were positive nuisance, if they made men forget the loving and beautiful and blissful Lord of their souls, the eternal Fountain of all knowledge, power, prosperity and happiness. Verily, he would say, the company of such soul-forgetful worshippers of earthly fortune was the most dreadful poison to the sincere worshippers of Spiritual Bliss.

According to the Master, the company of the poor and the distressed was preferable to that of the rich and the happy, inasmuch as it roused the nobler feelings of sympathy and benevolence and made the heart humble before the Lord. The poor had free access to his *Asrama* and had the first claim upon the *Prasad* of the Lord. The Master had no earthly source of income nor did he ever look to any human agency for monetary help. He wholly relied on the Lord for the maintenance of himself and his dependants. It was the Lord who sent him the requisite money through diverse channels. It was his principle not to make any saving out of what the Lord gave him for his own future emergencies. Whatever was sent to him by the Lord, he devoted to the worship of the Lord and to the services of the needy and the distressed, which he regarded as the best form of worship of the Lord. Food, clothing, coins were freely given to all sorts of needy people who asked for them, so far as the present resources of the *Asrama* would allow. Sometimes the boxes would have been emptied of the last pice, before the inmates of the *Asrama* had their meals. But charity must have a higher place than the satisfaction of their own hunger. It is not having, but giving, that makes man full.

In his distribution of spiritual wealth also, the Master would not exercise that amount of discrimination in cases of poor uncultured people, as he was found to do in cases of educated men of the upper grades of the society. Once a large number of men and women of a remote village in the district of Birbhum, who had heard of the glories of the Master from some of his disciples, became unaccountably maddened with yearning for initiation from him. Without any intimation they together left their houses and came to Calcutta. Along with *Brahmans* and *Kayasthas*, there were in the company people belonging even to the lowest castes, such as *Hadi, Muchi, Dom*, etc. There were among them people who were known to be thieves and dacoits, rogues and debauchees. But there was the same eagerness in them all for the blessed touch of the *Guru*. The day on which they arrived happened to be the holy day of *Siva-ratri* fast, and the Master was explaining to his disciples how through the pure mercy of Lord *Siva* a most vicious and heartless person like the *Byadha* (professional hunter) was liberated from all his sins and drawn to His own blissful spiritual realm, for one single act of piety and that also unconsciously done,—*viz.* fasting on the *Siva-ratri* day, keeping awake the whole night, and offering *Bel-leaves* with tears to the Lord present there (without his knowledge) in the form of *Linga.* One disciple, to whom the aforesaid people were known and who was perhaps the source of their inspiration, told him with a trembling heart that while one *Byadha* was delivered by the merciful *Siva-Sundara* (Siva the Beautiful) in that holy night, hundreds of *Byadhas* were waiting outside for similar unmerited mercy on this present *Siva-ratri* day ; what should *Siva-Sundara* do in their case? The Master, though no previous information about it had been given to him, smilingly replied that all those people were accepted by the *Guru* and that they would be blessed with initiation the next morning. At daybreak all of them, having bathed in the Ganges, assembled in the spacious hall, and the Master infused spirituality into them. The vanity of culture vanished from the minds of the gentlemen present, when they observed that as soon as the ceremony of initiation was gone through, there was a sweeping wave of spiritual emotion in all these apparently uncultured men and women, all outward signs of true Divine love were distinctly visible in their faces and limbs and movements, the Divine Name got by its own power absolute possession of their minds and tongues, and some went into ecstacy.

Thus without any definite design or purpose, without any organisation or programme, without any advertisement or propaganda, the Master went on executing his mission of transmitting currents of spirituality to all layers of the human society. While the work was proceeding in full force from his Calcutta residence, he obtained the

Divine command to leave this political and cultural capital of Modern India and retire to *Jagannath-Dham*, one of the principal centres of *Bhakti*-cult in the country,—the sacred Puri, which Sri Chaitanya, the greatest Incarnation of Divine Love, had made the centre of his unparalleled spiritualising mission during the last years of his bodily life. As soon as the orders came, Vijaykrishna as a perfect disciple got ready to depart. To him no work was at any time unfinished or half-finished, for he had no programme of work and he was not at all concerned with the result of what was accomplished by him or left unaccomplished by him. All his works were Divine works performed at Divine commands for purposes present in the Divine Mind. He was merely to do the part which was assigned to him, and that part must be regarded as the whole work so far as he was concerned. He would most gladly stop in the midst of any work in which he might be busily engaged, if he were so ordered by the *Guru*, and the idea that he left some work in an unfinished state would never cross his mind. He would be ready to depart from this world without a moment's delay, if the *Guru* beckoned him to do so. This is true discipleship.

When the Divine command was communicated to his disciples and admirers, they were taken by surprise and were naturally perturbed. But they knew that the courses of his actions were determined by an Authority with whom there was no room for remonstrances and importunities. They had, however, no suspicion in their mind that their Master was leaving Bengal for good and was advancing towards the final end of merging himself in *Jagannath*, the Source of his being. They were up and doing for making preparations for the journey, though with their hearts aching with the thought of the impending separation.

A steamer with two boats was hired. There was a huge gathering of disciples and admirers on the bank of the Ganges, and most of them had tears in their eyes. The journey to Puri was not such an easy affair at that time as it is now. The Master took leave of them and asked for their blessings, so that the purpose of his journey to the blissful Home of *Jagannath* might be fulfilled. Though they had no idea that the real purpose behind this journey was his return to and absolute unification with the One with Whom he was inwardly identified, but only physically separated, they had some vague apprehension that their Beloved Master might not again come back to them. Their hearts trembled to recollect the prediction of the Master's affectionate mother that once her son went back to *Jagannath,* from Whom she had obtained him within her womb, he would lose himself in Him and would no longer remain in this gross world of differentiated existence.

The Master started with a few disciples, who were almost his constant companions and attendants. His mind was now concentrated on the Beloved Lord of the universe, Whom he was going to meet. The feelings of a young bride on her journey to be united with the long-unseen beloved lord of her heart might in some degree bear comparison with the waves of emotion in the Master's heart. He was sometimes immersed in deep meditation and sometimes he looked hither and thither with strange delight. He saw all things with the eyes of love, he listened to every sound with the ears of love, his tongue poured love upon all around him. The whole world was to him full of beauty and new life. He enjoyed the natural scenery on either side of the canal through which the steamer cut its way, and his whole being danced in delight with the intuition, that the Lord of Beauty, the Winner of his heart, was, as it were, peeping through each tree, each leaf, each flower, each ripple of the water, each bird in the air, each patch of cloud in the sky, above him, below him, all around him. The Lord appeared to have surrounded him with beauty and loveliness and to be playing hide-and-seek with him.

Half-naked young lads of adjacent villages approached the steamer every now and then. The Master saw in them his own playful Lord in hungry and pitiful looks. The Master's disciples threw copper coins towards them. It was a sight to see these poor boys struggling hard with one another to get hold of these paltry coins. The Master looked with pity upon the weaker ones, who were pushed back and got nothing. His merciful glance was enough to prompt some of his disciples to plunge into the canal with some coins, to swim across to the bank, and to distribute them among these poor fellows who had been defeated in the struggle for possession, and then to swim back to the steamer. Such charities went on day after day, so long as the party was in the steamer. The Master taught that without the cultivation of love for all and charity to the poor no one could be worthy of having the sight of *Jagannath*. After four days' journey in the steamer, the Master with his disciples landed at Cuttack and was cordially received by his admirers there. In addition to the fare, the Master paid twenty rupees as reward to the crew and most humbly asked their blessings for the fulfilment of the object of his journey. From Cuttack the Master and his party went to Puri by railway.

At first the attendants felt some anxiety as to how the Master's palsied legs would carry his majestic body for more than a mile from the station to the Temple. The Master with a smile within walked on, apparently with a little difficulty and with a part of the burden of his body put upon the shoulders of two able-bodied disciples. Having proceeded to some distance, he rested for a while. In the meantime a few *Pandas* (priests employed in the service of *Jagannath*) met him and asked for money. He regarded the unexpected sight of the Lord's servants on the way as an excellent indication of the Divine mercy. He received them as the bearers of the greetings and blessings of his most Beloved Lord, and with his characteristic humility and devotional spirit took the dust of their feet, paid them a handsome amount and begged for their good wishes. Just as the *Pandas* departed with a delightful heart, the Master appeared to obtain immense strength in his legs and began almost to run for the Lord's Temple with the glorified name of *Jagannath* on his lips. Thus the first lesson he taught his disciples on reaching the sacred place was that due respect should be paid to the persons engaged in the service of the Deity and a worshipful attitude should be cherished towards them as the Lord's servants, without any consideration of their merits or demerits as particular individuals. The Lord bestowed on them the covetable privilege of rendering personal services to Him, managing the affairs of His Temple and looking after the comforts of His devotees ; and it was the duty of those who had faith in His infallible judgment to pay respects to them from that point of view.

The Master ordered his followers to commence *Kirtan* and began himself to sing and dance. The weakness of his legs disappeared. The whole atmosphere was electrified with a spirit of love and joy. The party proceeded on, singing and dancing and with little consciousness of the material surroundings. The people of the holy city were reminded of the days of Sri Chaitanya.

The spiritual influence of the Master was felt by all. Men and women from all quarters came out to the streets to witness and enjoy the heavenly scene of a band of God-intoxicated self-forgetful angelic pilgrims saturating the land and the air with Divine music and laughing and weeping and dancing with Divine madness in the hope of getting *Darshan* of their Beloved Lord. Many devotees beside themselves with joy joined the party. Every new locality on the way, associated with the *Lila* of the Lord and the greatest messenger of His love and mercy, gave new inspiration to the Master and his party, and fresh vigour and beauty were infused into their *Kirtan* and the outer expressions of their inner joy.

At dusk they reached the house previously fixed for their residence, and were eager to be blessed with the *Darshan* of the Lord immediately. In the meantime *Pandas* came with *Mahaprasad* and respectfully offered it to the Master and his disciples. The Master, in meek obedience to the command of the Lord communicated through His servants, sat down without hesitation to take the *Mahaprasad* and invited all his disciples to partake of it from the same dish with him. *Mahaprasad,* as it is believed by all devotees of the Lord, is in essence spiritual food in material form. The articles of food offered to the Lord and accepted by Him are spiritualised by the Divine touch, and they become endowed with the power of purifying and spiritualising the body as well as the mind of the individuals who partake of them. Accordingly all distinctions of caste and creed, all differences of rank and position, all questions of touchability and untouchability, disappear in the matter of taking the *Mahaprasad*. Men rise above the plane of *Varna* and *Ashrama* and dwell in the plane of pure *Bhakti* and universal love in the presence of the Lord. The *Mahaprasad* equips the body and the mind with the qualities necessary for being blessed with the *Darshan* of the Lord and feeling His loving presence within and outside.

Having partaken of the *Mahaprasad*, the Master could no longer keep patience and started immediately for *Darshan* of the Beloved. His disciples followed him. They were eager to see side by side the *Guru* and *Jagannath*, whom they knew to be identical in spirit. They entered the inner chamber and stood face to face with the Lord. The entire consciousness of the Master appeared to be concentrated in his eyes, which were fixed upon the beautiful face of the Almighty Lord of the universe. Tears of love and joy poured down his cheeks in incessant torrents. His lips were slightly moving and appeared to be talking with his Beloved in inaudible tones, choked with emotion. His whole body was sometimes rolling like that of a drunken man. He could not contain within himself the infinite joy of his communion with the Self of his self. The attention of all the pilgrims was attracted towards the Master, on whom the infinite beauty, the infinite love and the infinite joy of the Lord were so brilliantly reflected. They perhaps found the Lord more vividly and livingly manifested in the great devotee than in the image. The *Pandas*, astonished beyond measure, approached him with humility and looked after his physical comforts. After a long time, when the Master regained his outer sense, he bowed down to the Lord, gave enough money to His servants and slowly returned to his place of residence.

One day the Master told his disciples that he was ordered by Sri Chaitanya, the perfect Incarnation of Divine Love, to stay in this holy seat of the Lord for one year and devote the period to uninterrupted meditation on and glorification of His lordliness and love and to continuous service of His creatures. Of course he was doing this during the past years also. The disciples were now assured that the Master would not leave Puri within a year. Their services were at the disposal of the Master. They devoted all their energy and resources to carry out the wishes of the *Guru*.

CHAPTER XXI

FINAL ABSORPTION IN JAGANNATH

The affairs of the Master's *Asrama* were conducted according to his prescribed routine. He was almost day and night absorbed in meditation on his seat. Daily *Puja, Kirtan, Swadhyaya, Jajna,* religious discourse, reception of guests, and distribution of food and clothing and other articles of comfort, not only among the poor beggars, but also among beasts and birds and insects,—all these went on as usual according to his instruction under the faithful management of his disciples. They were in his service and he was in the service of all. His affection soon drew various kinds of animals to him. Bulls and cows, sheep and monkeys, birds and flies, rats and ants,—all became regular attendants to his *Asrama* and received their shares of his loving hospitality. He treated them all as his own children and saw in them the Lord of his heart appearing in diverse forms. He looked at and caressed the little monkey-children with the same eyes and hands of affection as his own little grand-children. They were all of the Lord and the Lord was in them all. With a small portion of his attention directed outward, the Master kept himself in touch with the affairs of the *Asrama* and the outer world.

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Though the Master's inner consciousness was in constant communion with the Divine, he never put a slight upon or showed any indifference to the rites and ceremonies of popular religion. He worshipped *Brahma* and enjoyed the bliss of His presence in and through all Names and

Forms. The Hindu scriptures have brought *Brahma* through these Names and Forms to the door of every human being, however poor in spiritual knowledge and devotion he may be. Religion is for all, and not for a few cultured and elevated minds. Religion has to make every man cognisant of the Divine Presence in all apparently finite beings of the universe and conscious of the essential unity of himself with all. As a suitable preparation for this realisation, it emphasises the special self-revelation of the Divine in particular persons, in particular localities, in particular images, in particular forms of ceremonies, and so on. The purpose is that the mind should be trained to realise the Infinite in the finite, the Eternal in the transitory, the Spiritual in the material, the One in the many, the supreme Ideal of the human heart in the actual facts of mundane experience. All *Tirthas* (holy seats of the Divine), all temples, all images, all forms of worship, all religious practices have got this purpose immanent in them, and it is with this end in view that the Divine Mercy has presented them to men suffering from spiritual blindness in this world. When the purpose is served, when the all-pervading presence of the Lord is truly realised, they do not lose their special sanctity or spiritual importance, but are looked upon as special seats of Divine self-revelation and enjoyed as special sources of inspiration and delight. The Master considered it an act of cruelty to the millions of ordinary men and women in the world to shake their faith in *Tirthas* and images and popular rituals, from which they obtained so much solace and hope in the midst of the diverse troubles and anxieties in their worldly life and which helped them so immensely in disciplining their moral and spiritual life and advancing towards the realisation of the Supreme Good.

The Master, inspite of his physical infirmity, used to pay visits to all the holy seats and obey the customary rules and formalities in offering worship to the Deities. Wherever he went, his mind was inspired and enraptured by the sacred ideas and sentiments associated with the place and the Deity, and his presence added to the spiritual influence of the atmosphere. On the *Siva-ratri* day he went with his disciples to the temple of *Siva* to offer special worship to the Lord. Surcharged with emotion, he began to dance with the name of *Siva* in his mouth and passed into the state of trance. He observed *Snana-jatra* and *Ratha-jatra* and other festivals of *Jagannath* and explained to his disciples the spiritual significance of these ceremonies. He offered special worship to *Bimala Devi* (the Divine Sakti) on special occasions. He took great delight in witnessing the *Chandan-Jatra* festival in the *Narendra-Sarowar*. He paid homage to all the places associated with the sacred memories of Sri Chaitanya and his disciples, and his humility and joy and occasional outbursts of emotions appeared to revivify those memories to all around him. Every particle of dust of the sacred places he regarded as holy and charged with spiritual influence.

On many occasions when the Master visited any spot of historical and spiritual importance or when in his presence there was any dissertation about some sacred *Pauranic* incidents, the old scenes appeared to be vividly re-enacted before his eyes and bioscopically reflected upon his environments. His companions also could discover new meanings in the old texts read and the old topics discussed in his holy presence, and could directly feel the sweet touch of the spiritual powers operating in the sacred places where they would go with him. His presence seemed to enliven the land and the air, the trees and the plants, the tanks and the streams, and to awaken the spiritual forces lying dormant in them. He infused new life into the cycle of festivals, which were year after year celebrated in the Divine City (Puri) from time immemorial. Within a short period *Jatiya Baba*—by which name the Master was generally addressed by the *Pandas* and the people of Puri—became the central spiritual personality of the sacred city and began in silence to exercise a degree of influence and authority unheard of after *Mahaprabhu* Sri Chaitanya.

While *Goswami* Vijaykrishna, at the command of the Beloved Lord of his soul, was thus engaged in the mission of diffusing spirituality on thoroughly constructive lines and establishing the reign of Truth and Love among all classes of people in one of the holiest centres of religious culture in India, the municipal authorities decided upon an act of cruelty and violence to animal life on a gigantic scale, which pained his noble and loving heart so deeply that he could not help interfering in the matter. The Chairman of the Municipality, with the approval of the commissioners, passed orders for the general massacre of monkeys within the municipal area, on the ground that they created lots of trouble and nuisance in the town. To all men of sincerely moral and religious temperament, respect for life and abstention from cruelty and violence is one of the most essential principles of morality and religion. But the municipal authorities perhaps suffered from no such moral and religious scruples.

Struggle for self-preservation and self-aggrandisement at the expense of others, the destruction of the weak and the survival of the strong, affection for the members of the same stock and hostile attitude towards those of others, —all these may appear to be the natural laws of life in the animal world. But a man is a man in so far as he accepts the Law of *Dharma* as superior to the natural Biological Law, and resists the rule of the latter in voluntary obedience to the injunction of the former. The Law of *Dharma,* which the Lord enjoins upon his highest creatures, whom He has created as essentially moral and spiritual beings endowed with freedom of judgment and action, is that their lives should be governed more by love and sympathy than by the animal instinct of self-preservation, more by the ideal of life-giving than by the urge of life-taking, more by the spirit of benevolence and co-operation than by the spirit of exploitation and competition, more by the conception of the superiority of spiritual life to animal life than by the perception of the actual strength of the present sensuous needs and hankerings. According to the Law of *Dharma,* the strong should voluntarily sacrifice their earthly interests for the happiness of the weak, men of superior calibre should freely lay down their lives in the service of those of inferior calibre and attain thereby the true immortality and the eternal spiritual happiness of the soul. Love, infinite and universal,—Love which unites each with all,—Love which opens the spiritual eyes of the individual and exhibits the identity of his self with that of the universe,—is the culmination of *Dharma.*

Such Love became the actual nature of the Master's heart. He could brook no cruelty, no violence, no hatred, no ill-will, even with regard to the lowest species of living creatures. His heart participated in the feeling of pain of every living being he came across. The element of sympathy was so strong in his nature that physical violence inflicted upon poor men and lower animals was on many occasions found to cause painful sores on his body. Even the narration in his presence of any form of distress of any human or subhuman being would produce similar distress in his nervous system.

How could a man of such tender heart bear the sight or even the report of the bleeding wounds and the agonies of death of so many monkeys? Sometimes he cried like a tortured child and sometimes his eyes burnt with fury. He appeared to be unable to preserve his habitual calmness. Every monkey of India seemed to be appealing to him for protection from the cruel hands of the selfish tyrants. He obtained inspiration from within to offer resistance with all his might and immediately made up his mind.

To men of religion like him all life is sacred. But special sanctity is attached to the lives of monkeys by the Hindu traditions. Next to human life, the lives of cows and monkeys are regarded as specially sacred by all classes of Hindus. They may tolerate the killing of other species of animals ; but no man with true Hindu blood in him can lend even passive support to the open killing of cows and monkeys. For millenniums the Hindus have been cherishing the belief that principally with the help of the monkey-tribes Ramchandra, the Divine Prince of Ajodhya, vanquished the greatest imperialistic *Rakshasa* power of Lanka and carried the triumphant banner of Aryan culture to the farthest southern limit of the Indian continent. All monkeys are regarded as descendants or kinsfolk of those brave and loyal followers of Lord Ramchandra, and the sight of a monkey reminds a Hindu of that glorious Incarnation of the Divine Spirit and the Soul of Aryan culture.

Hanuman, the chief of the monkey-devotees of Rama, was deified and is still an object of worship to the Hindus. He has been and will eternally be revered as an ideal *Bhakta,*—as a true embodiment of devotion,—as a devotee whose body and mind were perfectly dedicated to the constant loving service of the Lord,—one who could cross the ocean, carry the mountain on his head, play with fire, jump into the jaws of a ferocious *Rakshasa,* and undergo all kinds of hardship for the sake of the Lord, without ever feeling tired in body or dejected in spirits. The memory of Hanuman, to whatever race he might have belonged and whatever may be the historical value of the incidents associated with his name, is a treasure of unsurpassable spiritual value to the Hindus. Unique physical strength with unique tenderness of heart, courage which knows no fear with devotion undisturbed by any egoistic impulse, tenacity of purpose which no difficulty or obstacle can weaken with absolute self-surrender to the will of the Lord, wonderful capacity for organised action with the immaculate spirit of selfless service,—all these ideas have been blended together in the very connotation of his name.

Monkeys, being looked upon as kinsmen of Hanuman, the immortal incarnation of the spirit of devotion to the Lord, are objects of special regard to the Hindu mind. Whatever mischiefs they may do, a true Hindu cannot think of slaying them. The scriptures also prohibited the killing of monkeys. The Master's Hindu spirit was particularly shocked by the fact that some highly placed individuals, born of Hindu parents and passing by the name of educated Hindu gentlemen, lent their active support to this un-Hindu scheme of the general massacre of monkeys in one of the chief centres of Hindu culture in India.

Though rarely moving out from his seat of *Sadhana,* the Master started a vigorous agitation against this unholy scheme through his disciples and admirers. First, he tried to dissuade the authorities of the Municipal Board from giving effect to the scheme. Failing to prevail upon them, he caused a strongly reasoned petition to be drafted and numerously signed and submitted to the provincial Governor (then the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal) and the Viceroy. Journalistic propaganda was vigorously made in all the widely-circulated and influential newspapers. Missionaries were sent to different places for creating a powerful public opinion. The matter began to be hotly discussed in all the important centres of Hindu culture. There was a general awakenment of Hindu-feeling in the minds of the high and the low alike. It involved not only the question of respect for the lives of monkeys, but also the question of respect for the religious and cultural traditions of the Hindus.

The Government could not help intervening in the matter. The European District Magistrate, in the exercise of his magisterial authority, passed temporary injunctions upon the municipal authorities, prohibiting them from proceeding with the impious act. The Lieutenant Governor granted the petition of the public, wired to the Magistrate for continuing the prohibition and within a short time personally came down to Puri and announced his orders. The Master mildly accepted this triumph of his agitation as the blessing of the Lord and offered special *puja* to Mahabir (Hanuman).

The Master went on with his usual routine of work, as his mission of discipleship and Guruship required. Whenever any irregularities came to his notice with regard to the prescribed daily and periodical rites and observances in the Temple of Jagannath, he took steps to rectify them. Many wrongs, which were secretly perpetrated by designing persons and escaped the notice of others, were revealed to him by the Lord Himself. According to his instruction proper measures were adopted for setting things right. On the one hand he handsomely rewarded the *Pandas* and Brahmanas and employees of the Temple for their services to the Lord and the pilgrims, on the other hand he cautioned them in the name of the Lord against turning these services into a mere trade for their earthly interests. He was sometimes found sad with the thought that the very persons whom the Lord was pleased to entrust with the charge of preserving the purity and dignity of the spiritual culture of the nation were so awfully responsible for defiling and dishonouring it. But inscrutable are the ways of the Lord, and we must form the habit of appreciating the beauty and sublimity of whatever he does.

The Master taught by his instruction and behaviour how stubborn fights could be given to powerful and influential men of high social and political status when they abused their power and influence and authority, how strong measures could be taken against persons who were guilty of crimes against society and sins against the Lord, how systematic and organised efforts could be made in the teeth of violent opposition for removing the evils of our social and religious customs, without any feeling of resentment or enmity or revenge or hatred being cherished towards the criminals or sinners or opponents, without any breach of the even flow of love for all, and without any impairment of the consciousness that even the criminals and sinners were instruments in the Divine Hand and that their activities also were elements in the sportive self-expression of His blissful nature.

The Master had all along been Charity personified. He was charitable in all his self-expressions. Love always manifests itself in the form of charity. The Master, whose entire nature was saturated with Divine Love, was as a matter of course charitable in his thoughts, words and deeds. He always took charitable views of the opinions and sentiments of others. He always offered charitable interpretations to the speeches and actions, even of those who tried their utmost to injure his reputation and the spiritual mission of his life. He always looked at and talked about the bright and beautiful features of human character and taught his followers to seek out and admire those divine aspects even in the characters of the people generally known to be scoundrels and pests of the society. Even when he rebuked others for their wrong deeds or approved of apparently severe measures for chastising and chastening them, his heart was full of affection for them, and his deep sympathy with their weakness and earnest prayer for their well-being sweetened his reproaches, took away the harshness of the measures and immensely enhanced their purifying effects. He taught that the spirit of charity is the true indication of the spiritual advancement of a man and that through the practice of charity in all his thoughts, speeches and actions a man can actually see divine qualities in the characters of all persons and animals, though they may be hidden under palpable vices and depravities, just as a man with a true spirit of exploration can discover precious stones and metals lying deep underneath the foul surfaces of the earth.

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The last greatest and most memorable act of the Master at Puri was what the people describe as *Dana-Yajna,*—Charity-Sacrifice. Though he was himself a penniless half-naked *faqir,* though he had no definite source of income except the Divine Treasury, his heart was so much distressed at the sight of the miseries of the people that he felt impelled to give up his life in the attempt to lessen the pangs of their poverty. He appeared to be moved by the idea that while the Devil of Poverty with his fierce teeth and nails was so cruelly tearing out the entrails of the people, their hearts could not be expected to be brought to the path of spirituality, they could not be expected to be able to recognise the God of Love, Beauty and Bliss and to offer love and devotion to Him. If the poor hungry naked people bitten by the winter-chill and scorched by the summer-sun found in their actual life that there was nobody to sympathise with them actively, nobody to take note of how miserably they were passing their days and nights, nobody to come down voluntarily from his position of comfort and enjoyment for providing them with a fragment of bread or a piece of cloth or a thatched cottage to take shelter in, how could they be reasonably expected to sustain the belief that the eternally blissful Lord of the universe had a bit of mercy for them in any corner of His infinite heart, that He would come down from His all-transcending height of glory to respond to their prayer and deliver them from their distress, that Love for all was an essential constituent of His glorious character, and that the world was really full of expressions of His love and mercy, beauty and bliss, goodness and greatness? If they could nowhere feel the touch of Divinity in this life or if the Divine government of the world meant the conditions in which they lived, on what ground should they believe that there was a perfectly good and benevolent God at the centre of this system of the universe? With what hope should they pray to God and try to cultivate the attitude of reverence and worship towards Him? It was no wonder that the poorest countries were not only economically poor, but also morally and spiritually poor. God-loving men must fight against the poverty of the people, must try to serve them with the necessaries of physical existence, must actively sympathise with and participate in their sorrows, in order that their appeal to them for living a morally pure and religiously elevated life might touch their hearts and produce the desired effect.

The Master was inspired by his *Guru* with the idea that those who had the good fortune to experience the love and beauty of the Divine character were thereby entrusted by the Lord with the solemn charge of giving expression,—within however limited scope it might be,—to that Divine love and beauty in their own character and conduct, and that this expression ought to be in such forms as might be easily intelligible to the poor and depressed people. Charity to the poor is the most appropriate form of expression of the Divinity in human character and therefore the most effective form of preaching the love and beauty of the Lord to the suffering humanity. Charity, practised in the proper spirit, blesses those who practise it as well as those towards whom it is practised. Truly religious men whose minds are disciplined to see the Lord in the poor and to offer them useful things in the spirit of worship to the Lord, render effective help in the awakening of Divinity in those poor people. Charity thus becomes a dynamic power for the diffusion of spirituality in the society.

In the final stage of the Master's earthly life, his spiritual energy was directed by the Guru principally into this channel. He became a *Kalpataru,*—a wish-fulfilling Divine Tree. He seemed to have resolved upon satisfying, to the utmost of his resources, the physical wants of all poor creatures of the Lord who would approach him with any demand upon his services. He did not know, nor did he care to know, wherefrom the supply would come. He appeared to be placed in charge of the treasury of the Lord and authorised to make gifts to the poor according to his sweet will. The Master with his unerring spiritual insight saw that it was the playful Lord of his soul who presented Himself to His humble devotee in various garbs with diverse kinds of prayers and expressions of distress, that it was the infinite love and mercy of His blissful character which manifested itself in the form of the spirit of sympathy and charity in His servant's heart, and that it was He Who exhibited His unfathomable lordliness by mysteriously supplying through various channels all the funds necessary to meet the situation. It was the Lord's play all through, and the servant was to enjoy and bow down to it.

Men and women, old and young, flocked to him in large numbers,—some for food, some for cloths, some for money. He ordered his son Yoga-jiban and his other disciples to satisfy their demands. There was as it were a general invitation to all poor people for receiving what they needed from the Divine Treasury. The Treasury of the Lord was unlocked to the creatures of the Lord. Those who were put in charge of distribution were distinctly told that they should consider themselves as mere servants of the Lord entrusted with the Lord's cash box and engaged in the worship of the Lord with the Lord's funds. They were warned that it would be a gross dereliction of duty on their part if any spirit of worldly calculation or prudential consideration or closefistedness entered into their minds in the matter of the distribution of the Lord's money to the Lord's people, if in any case they gave preference to their own actual or probable needs to those of theirs, if at any time they thought that they were compassionately giving their own money to the unfortunate pitiable beggars. The must fight against the poverty of the people, must try to serve them with the necessaries of physical existence, must actively sympathise with and participate in their sorrows, in order that their appeal to them for living a morally pure and religiously elevated life might touch their hearts and produce the desired effect.

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Master asked all his disciples to fully avail themselves of the opportunity to purify themselves and to remove all obstructions in the way of their realisation of Divinity in life, by sincerely and earnestly taking their due parts in this great world-conquering Sacrifice,—in this grand Worship of the Lord in the form of unreserved Universal Charity.

Money in cash and kind was flowing in from known and unknown quarters, and it flowed out almost immediately to those who needed it and for whom it was meant. It was a common experience to his associates that the last pice was spent up before the day closed. Sometimes it happened that demands came, the Master's orders were passed, but the cash-box was empty, the store-house was empty, the inmates of the *Asrama* were without any reserves. But the Master's vow must be fulfilled, his orders must be carried out, the Lord in the guise of the beggars must not return disappointed. Some of the disciples ran in hot haste to the market, asked the shop-keepers for money or articles, as the occasion might require, on credit in the Master's name, and within an astonishingly short period came back to the Master and satisfied the guest's demands.

With the progress of the Sacrifice, the Lord put the faith, devotion and determination of the servants to harder and harder tests. This is the nature of the play of the Lord with his devotees. The Master saw and enjoyed the sweet smile of the Lord behind the trials to which He subjected him and his disciples. He was fully conscious that such trials were the most effective contrivances of the Lord for destroying the demon of 'ego' in the lives of His devotees and for converting them into the most transparent media of the playful expressions of His Divinity. The Master had already been without any egoistic consciousness and had surrendered his entire being to the Lord. He had therefore no anxiety on the score of the difficulties which the Lord in His sportive spirit put in the way of the continuous flow of his charity. But his disciples had to strain every nerve in the service of their Master.

The demands went on increasing, but the purse fell short. The Master could not think of closing the doors. The disciples were ready to undergo all sorts of hardship for the sake of the Master. None of them kept possession of more than one piece of rag to put on, and with regard to food they were satisfied with whatever was left after meeting the demands. The Master's charity was not confined only to those who personally came to the *Asrama* for help. Off and on he felt called upon to go to this or that temple, to this or that *Math* or *Asrama* or *Akhara,* to this or that congregation of *Sadhus* or *Brahmanas* or *Vairagis,* for the distribution of the *favours* of the Lord in the shape of coins or clothes or articles of food. The shortness of funds did not impose any restriction upon his charity, nor did it give rise to any prudential consideration in his mind. He was merely the Lord's servant and must carry out the Lord's wishes, as they were revealed to him.

The disciples tried their utmost to keep pace with the *Guru's* requirements. Some of the disciples appeared to have been charged with special spiritual fervour and supernormal energy for the successful execution of the Lord's orders. Several traders and monied men felt an inspiration to come forward of their own accord to advance money and commodities as loans to them without any consideration as to whether they would at any time be able to repay them. The debts began to swell and they rose to many thousands. The charity went on unabated. The name of *Jatiya Baba* was almost identified with the Spirit of Charity. *Jatiya Baba* himself was inwardly enjoying the Lord's play in which it was His pleasure to present him as the central figure before the eyes of His people. . .

One year passed. Sri Chaitanya's command was obeyed. The Lord was making arrangement to take his servant and playmate entirely into Himself. His health appeared to be somewhat broken down. Persistent entreaties from his disciples and admirers were coming for his return to Calcutta. He knew that his earthly life was drawing to a close. But some of his expressions led his disciples to believe that he was unable to leave Puri owing to his enormous debts and that he would be ready to return as soon as the debts were cleared. They could not anticipate that his leaving Puri would mean not his return to Bengal in this earthly body, but his return to the all-pervading and eternal Home of the infinitely loving and beautiful Lord of his soul in his perfect spiritual body.

Appeals were made to his disciples and admirers in Bengal for contributions. Wires were sent to some and letters to others. Some disciples moved to different villages for the purpose. Within a month an adequate amount was realised for clearing off all the debts. The very idea that Goswamiji would be in their midst again as soon as he was free from debts at Puri, appealed to the hearts of all his admirers and greatly expedited the collection of money. Special demands were made at the command of the Master to some disciples, who had so long been deprived of the opportunity to take part in the great Charity. They regarded it as their particular good fortune that *Guruji* remembered them in this connection.

One agent went to an out-of-the-way village of East Bengal and arrived at the house of a brother-disciple just at the moment when the latter was preparing for the funeral of his dear son. He forgot his bereavement at the sight of his Master's agent, who was wholly ignorant of it. When the Master's demand for Rs. 3,000/- was communicated to him, he was beside himself with joy at this indication of the mercy of the *Guru,* somehow procured the amount without the least delay, handed it over to the agent and sent him back immediately, and while taking leave of him, informed him by the way that he would have to make haste for disposing of the dead body of his most affectionate child.

One disciple, who in spite of his extraordinary abilities and attainments had been voluntarily living the life of a gentleman without any ostensible means of livelihood in Calcutta at the command of and in sole reliance upon the *Guru,* got all on a sudden a wire from Puri that it was *Jagannath's* order upon him to contribute within four days a sum of Rs. 1,000/- to the great Charity-Sacrifice of the *Guru.* For two days he tried hard for securing the money by all earthly means possible for him. He had to return disappointed from all quarters in his attempt to get a loan. He lost all faith in his own power. His ego was completely vanquished. He looked intently and prayerfully to the *Guru* for enabling him to carry out His orders. In the evening of the fourth day a brother-disciple's wife, unasked and uninformed, sent him her valuable ornaments with the most earnest request for his accepting them and authorised him to dispose of them in any way he liked for the service of the *Guru.* The gentleman, having felt the hand of the *Guru* in the affair, accepted them with a humble heart, borrowed the necessary sum from a pawnbroker on the security of these ornaments and remitted it to the Master by telegraphic money order. A month or so afterwards a person approached him, reminded him that he was the publisher of a book of his and said that a fresh edition of the book was in demand. The gentleman found in this an opportunity presented by the *Guru* for repaying his debts to his benefactress and said that he required one thousand rupees in cash, for which amount he might sell the copyright of the book. The publisher greedily seized this opportunity to buy the copyright of such a popular book at such a cheap price and offered the money immediately. The disciple received the money, released the ornaments with it and made them over to the beneficent sister. By the inexplicable mercy of the *Guru,* he was thus relieved of the last source of his personal income and turned into a perfect dependant upon the *Guru's* providence.

Another disciple, who had already been heavily involved in debts, got a message to wire three thousand rupees to *Guruji* without delay. He experienced great difficulty in finding a creditor, who could trust him with such a big loan at that stage of his pecuniary circumstances. He thought that it would be a great gain on his part, even if by selling all his landed property he could render this service to the *Guru.* He staked all his property, borrowed the amount at too high a rate of interest and felt a great relief when the money was sent in time.

In this way the disciples who had been physically separated from him by worldly circumstances felt the deep affection of the *Guru* in being invited to enjoy the bliss of participating in His *Dana-Yajna.* All were taught that *Nama* and *Dana*—the Divine Name and Charity,—were the two most powerful weapons, especially in this

Kali-Yuga, for cutting off the manifold ties of this world of ignorance, egoism and sorrow, and making way to the realm of absolute bondlessness, godliness and blissfulness. In the present order of civilization, money may not inappropriately be regarded as occupying the central and most prominent position in human life. Attachment to money means slavery to this world. It naturally leads to hatred, fear, rivalry, hostility, restlessness, dissatisfaction and all sorts of devilish propensities. It drives the mind away from God. It seeks to exploit even religion for the satisfaction of its insatiable greed and to convert religion itself into irreligion. The powers and glories of the Divine Name appear to shrink from manifesting themselves to the conscious experience of a man, in whom attachment to money prevails. Without the practice of active charity in the spirit of devotion, this attachment cannot be killed, slavery to the world cannot be got rid of, love for God and love for His self-manifestations cannot be developed, the true significance of the Divine Name cannot be realised, the true spiritual mission of human life cannot be fulfilled. Charity prepares the ground, on which the Divine Name, implanted by the *Guru,* can have its full growth, can perfectly unfold itself as infinitely good, loving, beautiful and blissful *Brahma.* The practice of full-hearted charity and concentrated devotion to the Divine Name constitute, as the Master showed in his life, the basic *Sadhana* of the *Yoga of Love.*

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The Master's mission in this physical life was now fulfilled. He got the permission of the *Guru-Brahma*—the eternal Lord of his heart—to merge his existence in Him. He exemplified in his life all the diverse aspects of spiritual *sadhana* suited to this age. He pointed out in course of his life's journey the relative importance of each of these aspects. He unveiled the essence of religion and the supreme ground of harmony of all religious systems. He presented the highest truths of religion and the most infallible methods of religious discipline in the most popular forms. He brought down God to the doors of the poorest of the poor, the meanest of the mean, the most depressed and suppressed of the human spirits, as their loving *Father* and *Mother* and *Friend* and *Lord*, and demonstrated that the Divine Mercy was for all, that no human being was unworthy of it. He conveyed the message of Hope to the hopeless, the message of Faith to the faithless, the message of Love to the most hard-hearted, the message of the closest proximity of the Supreme Lord to those who thought of Him as beyond the bounds of this boundless universe. He imported the ideal of *Sannyasa* into the worldly life and put the practice of *Yoga* within the reach of worldly people. His religion was a matter of daily and hourly practical life, and not a matter of dogmatism or sentimentalism or ritualism. He made religion so sweet, so delightful, so heart-touching, so easy and natural, as to be attractive to all kinds of men and women, young and old, cultured and uncultured. He illustrated in his life the great truth of the realisation of perfect freedom through absolute self-surrender to the *Guru* and revived the *Guru-Vada* in a new and philosophical form convincing to the rationalist youths of the present age. His emphasis on charity as an indispensable method of spiritual self-discipline furnished the spiritual basis of a socialst order of human relations. Personally he, being *Sadguru* of the present Age, took charge of the purification, enlightenment and deliverance of several thousand human souls.

The purposes for which he kept himself in his physical organism were from his view-point fully accomplished, and he had no need for remaining here any longer. Hence while the Master's disciples were making arrangements for his departure to Calcutta, the Master's Master was arranging from behind the scene to take him wholly into Himself.

Every bit of the life of Vijaykrishna was a lesson to spiritual aspirants ; the mode of his taking leave of it was no less so. The spiritual influence which Vijaykrishna, the embodiment of Love and Devotion, exercised upon the moral, social and religious life of all classes of people overshadowed the position and prestige and authority of some individuals who had so long been exploiting the blind credulity and the moral cowardice of the weak-minded people, and they were not well-disposed towards him. The Divine Spirit that comes down to purify the moral and spiritual atmosphere of the human society naturally rouses the fear, jealousy and envy of the evil spirits, the *Asuric* powers, which the Lord in His sportive delight creates from His own *Maya* and allows to play their anti-Divine parts in the field of His self-expression in this world and to serve as the dark background of the glorious manifestations of His Divinity. The Lord takes pleasure, sometimes in destroying them by the show of His superior powers, sometimes in winning them over by the show of His love and beauty and converting them into instruments for the propagation of the spiritual ideals, and sometimes in outwardly accepting defeat in their hands by the show of His voluntary self-limitation and putting them in their true colours before the eyes of the Humanity.

When the time for the Master's departure from the stage of visible activities arrived, a devilish impulse possessed the minds of those evil-eyed individuals (of course in accordance with the Divine plan) to put an end to his bodily life. They made a heinous conspiracy, got a sufficient quantity of life-killing poison mixed with *Mahaprasad,* presented it to the Master and with a show of reverence and devotion insisted on his swallowing it immediately in their presence. The Master with his inner eyes saw through the whole design. He realised that this was the contrivance which the playful Lord of his soul adopted for taking him off from the eyes of the world. He resolved to perform the final act of charity by making a gift of his bodily life to those who wanted to take it. With unperturbed calmness and devotion he bowed down to the *Mahaprasad,* which he had not the heart to disregard in spite of its being defiled and desecrated and poisoned, and swallowed it without any feeling of enmity or hatred towards the conspirators. Though possessing full power to counteract the effect of the poison, he did not wish to exercise it. He allowed the poison to produce its natural effect upon the body. But the poison, though so very strong, did not produce immediate death. Perhaps the Lord wanted to impart some more lessons to the world through the waning life of His beloved devotee. He was made to live for one month in the body burning with the effects of poison. Immediately after entering into the stomach, the poison operated within the body like a blazing fire and caused a terrible burning sensation from the tongue to the intestines. Unable to bear the agony, the Master fainted and did not regain consciousness till six hours elapsed. The severe pain in the body and the gradual waste of physical energy continued. His son Yoga-jivan and the other disciples were alarmed. But the story of the poisoning was not disclosed to them till the seventh day.

All the admirers of the Master, from the highest officials of the district down to the street-beggars, raged with fury and wanted to have the culprits adequately punished. The Master, full of pity and tenderness for the ignorant instruments of the Divine Hand, calmed them down and wanted them to see the loving hand of the Lord in the affair. He told them in a sweet and affectionate tone that the poor fellows were already suffering terribly at heart from a biting sense of crime and sin as well as from the fear of possible consequences, and that the devotees of the Lord of Love, instead of wishing to take revenge and multiply their sufferings, ought to pray for their peace and well-being. He said that he could not fasten the responsibility on those poor creatures of the Lord for their apparently misguided,—but in truth divinely ordained—conduct and that he cherished no feeling of displeasure or hatred against them. He further assured them that his life and death were wholly at the disposal of the *Guru,* and that no earthly power could either preserve his life or destroy it against His will. The Master was ready to offer his life as a sacrifice to the Lord for purging the sins off the heart and body of the culprits and making them capable of realising Divinity in themselves.

No further steps were taken against the sinners. The poison went on doing its work of progressively killing the tissues of his physical body. On most occasions the Master did not give any outward indication of the intense suffering within the nerves and muscles. His remembrance of the Divine Name was uninterrupted. He experienced the love-dance of the Lord in the burning sensations in his bodily organs. The routine of disciplinary work in the *Asrama* continued as usual. The Master himself used to sing the names and glories of the Lord at the specified periods of the days and the nights. He never took his bed, never slept. This was his habit for many long years. He had the determination not to lie down before the last moment of his life. He was in constant communion with his Beloved.

On the night previous to the day of his final merging of the self in the Universal Self, he blessed all his disciples, gave them some parting lessons, asked them to be true to the *Sadhana* they received and told them that from that day *Jagannath* Himself would take their entire charge. He hinted that he was going to abandon his apparent individuality and to be absolutely unified with *Jagannath,* the Lord of the universe.

At 9-20 P.M. of the 22nd day of the month of Jaistha in the year 1306 of the Bengali era, just after one lunar month from the date of his taking poison, the Master left the body and became one with *Jagannath*. So long he had been enjoying the Infinite Life in the finite ; now his finite life was merged in the Infinite. The finite and mortal psycho-physical organism, through which the Infinite and Eternal Life immanent in the universe had been enjoying Its Divinity in a specialised form under worldly conditions, and making as it were an exhibition of Its most glorious attributes of Love, Beauty, Freedom, Goodness and Blissfulness to countless men and women of the present age, was now allowed to be dissolved in the elements of the universe, while the Life within shone in Its universal character and continued to shower Its blessings upon all creatures, and especially the spiritual aspirants. Though there was very little change in the true self of the Master, the disciples who had been accustomed to see him and to be blessed with his Divine touch in and through his physical embodiment received an unbearable shock and felt an irreparable loss. As soon as the news took air, all classes of people began to throng to the *Asrama* with sobs and tears, and even the monkeys and birds and other animals gave various expressions to their deep sense of bereavement. The whole town was in mourning.

Having recovered from the first stunning shock, the disciples and admirers made arrangements for funeral. A plot of land on the north side of Narendra-Sarowar, where sometime back the Master had the occult vision of a magnificent temple and a centre of spiritual culture, was purchased through the efforts of the prominent citizens. The Master's holy body, every bone and muscle and nerve and blood-corpuscle of which were permeated with the Divine Name and spiritualised through the incessant meditation on the Supreme Spirit for so many years, was carried in a largely attended procession to the sacred spot, solemnly adored with all due ceremonies and reverently placed in the tender lap of Mother Earth. Mother Earth had supplied the soul of Vijaykrishna with the ingredients of his body ; Vijaykrishna by dint of his life-long *Sadhana* saturated these earthly elements with Divine qualities and repaid his debts to the Mother by returning to Her what were Hers with such a halo of spirituality round them. This is what Mother Earth prayerfully expects as the highest reward for Her motherhood from Her human children. The Temple of the Master's vision took a short period afterwards a magnificent material form through the efforts of the devoted disciples and is now one of the chief centres of spiritual culture in the Jagannath-Dham.

A great life, having fulfilled its mission, disappeared from the public gaze. Vijaykrishna's life illustrated what the quest of the Absolute in this human life truly means, as well as what the perfect realisation of the Absolute in this world of relativity truly means. His life pointed out how near and dear *Brahma* is to every finite being and exhibited how deeply a man can love *Brahma* and can enjoy His love, how without the realisation of *Brahma* a man can feel his existence as unbearable and how with the realisation of *Brahma* his entire existence is sweetened and beautified, spiritualised and divinized. All the stages of development of the outlook and character of a sincere Truth-seeker are brought clearly before our view by his life, and a clear conception of what perfect Truth-realisation implies is also obtained from it. Vijaykrishna's life is a complete scripture, a sacred religious book, revealed by the Lord for the guidance of the present age, along with its exposition and illustration. His empirical life has been taken away from our empirical view, but he is still vividly living to all devotees who earnestly look to him for guidance and help in their journey to the Home of Bliss, and he will continue to live in the memory of the God-seekers of all ages as a glorious image of Divine Love and Beauty, as a perennial fountain of Divine inspiration and as a self-luminous source of Divine light.

Sri Gurum paramanandam
Vande Chaitanya-Vigraham
Yasya smaranamatrena
Chidanandayate tanuh.

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